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TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS

SAPTHAGIRI

ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

OCTOBER 2021

Rs 5/-

11-10-2021
MONDAY
NIGHT :
GARUDAVAHANAM

TIRUMALA
SRI VENKATESWARASWAMIVARI BRAHMOTSAVAMS
FROM 07-10-2021 TO 15-10-2021

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams



Tirumala
Sri Venkateswaraswamivari Brahmotsavams
From 07-10-2021 to 15-10-2021

07-10-2021
Thursday
Day:
Dwajaroohanam



07-10-2021
Thursday
Night : Peddaseshavahanam



08-10-2021
Friday
Day: Chinnaseshavahanam

BHAGAVADGITA



Śvaśūrān suhṛdaś cai va
senayor ubhayor api
tān samīkṣya sa kaunteyaḥ
sarvān bandhūn avasithitān

Arjuna saw his fathers-in-law
and friends in both the armies.
When the son of Kunti (Arjuna)
saw all these kinsmen thus
standing arrayed.

(Chapter- I, Sloka-27)

INVOCATION

Koṇḍalalō nelakonna kōṇēṭi rāyaḍu vāḍu
koṇḍalanta varamulu guppeḍuvāḍu..

kondalalo...

Kummara dāsuḍaina Kuruvarattinambi
immanna varamulella iccinavāḍu
dommulu cēsinayaṭṭi toṇḍamān jakkuravarti
rammanna cōṭiki vacci nammina vāḍu..

kondalalo...

Accapu vēḍukatō anantāḷuvāriki
muccili veṭṭiki mannmōcina vāḍu
maccika dolaka tirumala nambi tōḍuta
iccanicca māṭalāḍi naccinavāḍu..

kondalalo...

Kaṇcilōna vuṇḍa tirukkacci nambi mīda karu
ṇiṇci tava yeḍaku rappiṇcina vāḍu
eṇcanekkuḍaina vēṇkaṭēṣuḍu manalaku
maṇcivāḍai karuṇa pāliṇcinavāḍu..

kondalalo...



Residing in the hills, He is the Konetiraaya!
He is the one who can bestow boons as huge as mountains!

To 'Kuruvaratti Nambi' the potter,
He bestowed all that he asked for!
To the king 'Tondamaan' who was waging wars,
He appeared wherever he had promised!

To 'Anantalvar' with utmost delight,
Sharing his drudgery. He carried the sand weight!
With 'Tirumalanambi', in the form of friendly gestures,
He joyfully shared some banter and gossips!

On 'Tirukachhinambi' who was in Kanchi,
He showered His grace and made him come to His place!
Lord Venkatesha cannot be measured by us,
With His bounteous compassion, the benevolent Lord graces us!!

- Annamacharya



CHANT GOVINDA NAAMAAS & SEEK BLESSINGS OF THE LORD

Sri Srinivasa Govinda
 Sri Venkatesa Govinda
 Bakthavasthala Govinda
 Bhagavatahpriya Govinda
 Nithyanirmala Govinda
 Neelameghashayama Govinda
 Puraanapurusha Govinda
 Pundarikaksha Govinda
 Govinda Hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Nandanandana Govinda
 Navaneetha chora Govinda
 Pasupalaka sri Govinda
 Papavimochana Govinda
 Dustasamhara Govinda
 Durita nivarana Govinda
 Sistaparipalaka Govinda
 Kastanivarana Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Vajramakutadhara Govinda
 Varahamurthivi Govinda
 Gopijanalola Govinda
 Govardahanodhara Govinda
 Dasaradhanandana Govinda
 Dasamuka mardhana Govinda
 Pakshi vahana Govinda
 Pandavapriya Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Masthyakurma Govinda
 Madhusudhana hari Govinda
 Varaha narashima Govinda
 Vamana brugurama Govinda
 Balaramanuja Govinda
 Bowdhakalkidhara Govinda
 Venuganapriya Govinda
 Venkataramana Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Sithanayaka Govinda
 Srithaparipalaka Govinda
 Daridrajanaposhaka Govinda
 Darmasamsthapaka Govinda
 Anadha rakshaka Govinda
 Aapadbhandhava Govinda

Sharanagatavasthala Govinda
 Karunasagara Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Kamladhalaksha Govinda
 Kamithaphaladaha Govinda
 Papavinashaka Govinda
 Pahi murare Govinda
 Srimudramkita Govinda
 Srivathsamkitha Govinda
 Dharaneenayaka Govinda
 Dinakarteja Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Padmavatheepriya Govinda
 Prasannamurthy Govinda
 Abayahastha pradarshana Govinda
 Masthayavatara Govinda
 Sankachakradhara Govinda
 Sharjagadhadhara Govinda
 Virajatheertha Govinda
 Virodhimardhana Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Salagramadhara Govinda
 Sahasranaamaa Govinda
 Lakshmivallaba Govinda
 Lakshmanagraja Govinda
 Kasthuritilaka Govinda
 Kaamchanaambaradhara Govinda
 Garudavaahana Govinda
 Gajaraajarakshaka Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Vaanarasevita Govinda
 Vaaradhibandhana Govinda
 Edukondalavaadaa Govinda
 Ekaswaroopaa Govinda
 Sriraamakrishnaa Govinda
 Raghukulanandana Govinda
 Prathyakshya deva Govinda
 Paramadayaakara Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Vajrakavachadhara Govinda
 Vijayamthimaala Govinda

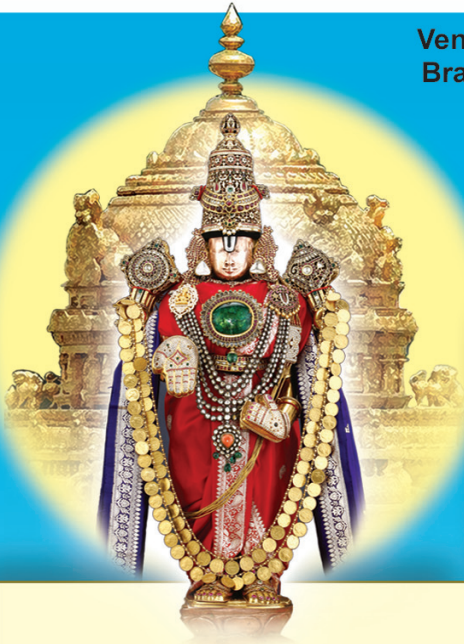
Vadikaasulavaada Govinda
 Vasudeva tanayaa Govinda
 Bilvapatraachita Govinda
 Bhikshuka samsthutha Govinda
 Stri pumroopaa Govinda
 Shivakeshavamoorthy Govinda
 Brahmandaroopaa Govinda
 Baktha rakshaka Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Nithyakalyana Govinda
 Neerajanaabha Govinda
 Hathieeraamapriya Govinda
 Harisarvothama Govinda
 Janaadhanamoorthy Govinda
 Jagathsakshiroopa Govinda
 Abishekapriya Govinda
 Aapannivarana Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Rathnakireetaa Govinda
 Raamaanujasutha Govinda
 Swayamprakaasha Govinda
 Asrithapaksha Govinda
 Nithyashubaprada Govinda
 Nikilalokeshaa Govinda
 Aanandarupa Govinda
 Aadhyantharahitaa Govinda
 Govinda hari Govinda
 Gokulanandana Govinda
 Ehaparadaayaka Govinda
 Ebharaajarakshaka Govinda
 Paramadayaloo Govinda
 Padmanaba hari Govinda
 Tirumalavasaa Govinda
 Tulasee vanamaala Govinda
 Sheshadrinilaya
 Govinda
 Sheshasayevi
 Govinda
 Sreenivaasa
 Sri Govinda
 Sri venkatesa
 Govinda
 Govinda hari
 Govinda
 Gokulanandana
 Govinda



Venkatadri Samamsthanam
Brahmande nasti kinchana



Venkatesa Samo Devo
Na Bhuto na Bhavishyati



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Back Cover : A view of Chakrasnanam at Tirumala

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SPLENDOUR OF 'BRAHMOTSAVAMS'

Lord Sri Venkateswara is the supreme God. Devotees across the world throng the holy shrine in Tirumala throughout the year to offer their vows on fulfilment of their wishes. A glimpse of God even for a few seconds will make them forget their travails of the journey. They would like to personally participate in each ritual performed to the Lord everyday despite the constraints of time, space, and availability. To obviate the problems faced by the large section of devotees, the TTD is telecasting all programmes live on SVBC. This facility is a great boon to many who are not in a position to travel due to Covid restrictions as they can still participate in virtual mode sitting at home. What is relevant for the devotee is the Bhakti and unstinted faith in Lord Venkateswara.

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The annual Brahmotsavams offer a great opportunity for the devotees to witness Sri Malayappa Swami along with Ammavarlu on various vahanas decorated specially for the occasion. The Brahmotsavams commence with the hoisting of the sacred Garuda flag on the Temple's consecrated Dwajasthamba (Flag post). The idol of Vishvakshena, the Commander-in-Chief of the Lord, is taken in procession, signifying inspection of the procession route of the Lord. Each day, the Lord is taken in procession on various chariots both in the morning and evening. It is a beautiful spectacle. The Brahmotsavams conclude with Snapana Tirumanjanam (Holy bath). Chakrathaalwar, representing the Lord, is given a holy dip. After the Chakra Snanam, the sacred flag is brought down, indicating the conclusion of the Brahmotsavams.

TTD has been taking various new initiatives from time to time for the improvement of facilities to the devotees in the multifarious 'Seva' activities. It has launched 'Navaneeta Seva' on the occasion of Sri Krishna Janmashtami to protect indigenous cow breeds and promote organic farming with cow products. It is decided to use cow ghee in the preparation of daily naivedyam to the God. TTD has also introduced 'Gudiko Gomata' programme as part of the wider propagation of Hindu Dharma. TTD has launched manufacture of Agarbattis (Aromatic sticks) from the flowers offered to the Lord everyday in several services. Panchagavya products will be available for sale in the near future. Plans are afoot to convert Tirumala into a holy green city by replacing diesel and petrol vehicles with electric vehicles. All these initiatives go a long way in obtaining the grace of Lord Venkateswara in a more conducive environment. New Accommodation Management System has been introduced to avoid unnecessary waiting for the pilgrims for accommodation. The devotees who booked accommodation on-line through advance reservation will get an SMS to his registered mobile number in 30 minutes along with the name of the Sub-enquiry office they have to approach for accommodation. In the current booking also, the devotee gets an SMS to his/her registered mobile number about the Sub-enquiry office where the accommodation will be allotted to him.

TTD has taken up many spiritual programmes in Tirumala. Among them, Parayanam of Bhagavadgita, Sundarakanda, Balakanda, Virata Parvam and Vedic mantras recitation and many more to eradicate Covid 19 pandemic and protect the country. Participate in the programmes virtually and get the blessings of the Lord.

May Lord Sathagiriswara shower His boundless blessings on us.

BRAHMOTSAVAM AT TIRUMALA

- Adviteeya Dixit

Lord Srinivasa Tiruvenkatamudaiyan, shines forth eternally upon the crest of the Venkatadri Hill, like a black cloud which is enclosed by a streak of lightning. Of all the festivals celebrated in honor of this matchless Lord, the annual Brahmotsavam is the most popular one. Here, we present an overview into the glorious history, the nature, and the significance of this marvelous festival-one of its kind on earth.

The earliest epigraphical reference to the conduct of a Brahmotsavam at Tirumala dates to perhaps the year 966 C.E., when a certain princess Samavai (also called as Kadavan Perundevi), the daughter of a Pallava chieftain, is said to have made donations for the consecration and the celebration of a nine-day festival in honor and worship of Lord Manavalapperumal (the deity of Bhoga Srinivasa, also called the Kautuka Bera). Apart from making endowments towards food offerings, celebrations of festivals, etc., she also bestowed numerous ornaments made of exquisite precious gems, gold and silver, meant for the daily adornment of this deity (T.T.D. Inscriptions Volume 1, No. 8, 18 T.T.). While this reference is not to be taken to mean that this was the first ever Brahmotsavam that was celebrated, it certainly gives us an idea regarding the antiquity of this great festival, and also perhaps the nature of its previous association with the honoring of the Bhoga Srinivasa Archa Murti.

An inscription record dated 8th July 1551 C.E. (T.T.D. Inscriptions Volume V, No. 126, 662 T.T.) lists in detail the offerings pledged to be made during the course of at least ten Brahmotsavam festivals that were to be conducted within a single year at Tirumala, as instituted by various illustrious patrons of the temple. The celebrations during these ten festivals spanned about 11 days each, during the solar (Tamil) months of Aavani, Purattasi, Aippasi, Kartikai, Tai, Masi, Panguni, Chittirai and twice in the month of Ani, with the total thus amounting to an extraordinary 110 days of festivities. This indicates the immaculate grandeur of our beloved Lord, and that of His worship at Tirumala!

The continued celebration of the Brahmotsavams over the years, however, has varied with regard to the finer details such as - the deity to which the honors are offered during the festival (currently to Sri Malayappa Swami or the Utsava Bera), the number of days over which the celebrations are held (currently a nine day festival), the number of such celebrations annually (currently one, and occasionally two), the number of Vahanas involved in the festivities and the timing of such celebrations within a given calendar year.

Utsava conducted by Lord Brahma : Indeed, the word 'Utsava' is etymologically derived as ut + su + affix 'ach'. This word 'Utsava' denotes any activity that is certain to bring about extreme delight ('that which generates delight'- ref. Vachaspatyam). The festivities that bring out the glory of the Lord



and His consort are certainly the cause of extreme delight to the devotees, and thus the use of the term. The addition of the prefix 'Brahma' to the word 'Utsava' denotes the fact that the 'Utsava' or the 'celebration' is conducted by the four-faced (Chaturmukha) Brahma himself, in honor of the Supreme Lord. This is revealed in the Varaha Purana (50-36) where Brahma addressed the Lord thus- "dhvajarohanapurvasca karyastava mahotsavah. sa ca tvaya mahabhumannangikaryah sriya saha." – "O Supreme Lord! Preceded by the hoisting of the (Garuda) banner, I wish to celebrate a 'mahotsava'- a great festival in honor of You along with Goddess Sree, and You must (kindly) accede to it!". Since that deity Brahma himself is believed to conduct this festival even to this day, it is appropriately called Brahmotsavam.

In its current format, the Brahmotsavam is held over a period of nine days. The festival is celebrated in the solar month of 'Kanya' or 'Purattasi' (Tamil name), as is ordained in the Varaha Purana (50-37): "utsavam dhvaja purvam ca kanyamasam gate ravau"- "the celebration, preceded by the hoisting of the banner is to be performed in the month of Kanya". The key is the conjunction of the solar month of 'Kanya' (Purattasi) with the asterism of 'Shravana'- the auspicious nakshatra that is associated with the day of appearance of Lord Venkateswara. In fact, it is important to note that the conduct of the festival is arranged such that its ninth and concluding day coincides with the occurrence of the Shravana Nakshatra. This supremely sacred day is marked with the special ablutions of the Lord and His consort in the sacred waters of the Pushkarini. Currently, this sacred ablution is accomplished in the Pushkarini with the Chakra-Snana only, where Chakrattalvar or the deity of the Sudarshana Chakra is momentarily immersed in the Pushkarini tank.

Salakatla (annual) Brahmotsavam : During certain years, the occurrence of an additional lunar month (called Adhika Masa) causes the solar and the lunar calendar to go slightly out of sync. During such years, there arises the need to celebrate two Brahmotsavams- one to coincide with the solar month of Kanya (Purattasi) and the other with the corresponding lunar month. In this case, the additional preceding Brahmotsavam is called the 'Salakatla Brahmotsavam' (celebrated usually around the month of September), while the traditional Brahmotsavam celebrated subsequently is called as the 'Navarathri Brahmotsavam' (usually around the month of October).

Hoisting of the Flag : The onset of the festival is preceded by certain rituals. On the evening prior to the commencement of the festival, a procession is carried out for Sri Vishwakshena (or Senapathi). Vishwakshena, accompanied by other Nityas such as Ananta, Garuda, and Sudarshana, goes to inspect all the arrangements made for the festival. This also involves the

collection of some earth for the performance of 'Ankurarpanam'- which is necessary prior to the commencement of any auspicious celebration. This is marked by the sowing of nine different grains- navadhanya, in several earthen pots called 'Palikas' and is done as an offering to the divinities (Nityasuris). The festival starts the next morning with the raising of the Garuda banner. This event is referred to in inscriptions as the 'Thirukkodi tirunal' –'the sacred day of hoisting the divine flag or banner' and this 'Dwajaarohana'- 'the hoisting of the flag' marks the first day of the festival. Beginning with that day and over the next eight days, the Lord is taken in procession around the streets of Tirumala, where He vouchsafes blessings to one and all, while being carried on the top of various 'Vahanas' (rides). These processions are accompanied with the chanting of Vedic hymns, sacred Tamil Prabandhams, with rendition of Sankirtanas and etc.; and they occur twice daily- during the day and again at night, with different





‘Vahanas’- each of which bears special significance. Every day, the Lord also receives a special and sacred ablution called Snapana Tirumanjanam, along with His consorts.

Each processional Vahana represents a particular divine attribute or a particular divine pastime of the Lord and thus carries deep significance. This is described in more detail below.

Servants of the Lord : On the evening of the first day of the festival, the Lord ascends the ‘Pedda Sesa Vahanam” along with His consorts in procession. On the morning of the second day, He ascends the ‘Chinna Sesa Vahanam’. Both these represent Adisesha, the serpent who is in fact called Anantha- owing to possessing innumerable hoods. Indeed, the representation of seven hoods seems to give the meaning that Adisesha himself takes the form of the seven hills, as described by Annamacharya in the famous sankeertana “adivo alladivo” (1-23). In the Stotraratna (40), Sri Yamunacharya describes the various kinds of services provided to the Lord by Adi Sesa as follows- “nivasa-sayyasana-padukamsukopadhana varsatapavaranadibhih”- “You are His abode

(nivasa), His couch or bed (sayya), His seat (asana), His sandals (paduka), His raiment (amsuka), His pillow (upadhana), His protection (varana) against rain (varsa) and sun (atapa), i.e., the Lord’s umbrella and etc. Sri Ramanuja indicates (in the Vedarthasangaha) that ‘Sesa’ is one who, by nature, possesses a desire to purely promote the interests of another entity. That other entity, who is called the ‘Sesin’, is the Supreme Lord. Thus, Adisesha represents all Jivatmas- sentient souls, who by nature possess the attribute of being the servants of the Supreme Lord. Even as is revealed by Lord Shiva in the Mantra-raja-pada stotra (11): “dasabhutah svatah sarve hyatmanah paramatmanah”- “indeed all the sentient beings are innately the ‘dasa’- servants of the Supreme Lord.” Thus, the coming together of the Lord - the Seshin and Ananta - the foremost Sesa serves to remind us of our ultimate goal in the path of spiritual progress- i.e., the attainment of servitude at the feet of the Lord.

Hamsa - Protecting Vedas : On the night of the second day of the festival, the Lord is seated in a Hamsa Vahana. The Hamsa or swan reminds us of the Hamsa avatara that was taken by the Lord for the protection of the Vedas. Time and again, the Lord takes various forms in order to protect the ancient dharma of the Vedas. Even as Arjuna addresses Him in the Gita (11- 18)- “sasvatadharmagopta”- (You are) the protector of the eternal dharma (i.e., of the Vedas).

On the morning of the third day, He is seated upon a Simha Vahana. The Simha or lion reminds us of the Lord’s advent as Lord Narasimha for the protection of His devotee Prahalada, and thus provides reassurance to the devotees and quells their fears. On the evening of the third day, He is seated under a pearl canopy. Of Him being seated inside such a pearl canopy reminds us of the eternal presence of the Lord in His divine transcendental and pure abode of Sree Vaikuntam.

Fulfil all the Desires : On the morning of the fourth day of festivities, the Lord moves in procession under a Kalpa-vriksha. His presence along with this ‘wish-yielding tree’ indicates that Lord Venkateswara is here to satisfy all the desires and to take care of all the needs of devotees; even as a ‘Kamadhenu’ – divine wish yielding cow, or as a ‘Chintamani’- celestial wish yielding gem. The Lord is the source of all ‘Purusharthas’ for the devotees, even as He Himself states (Gita 9-22) “yogaksemam vahamyaham”- “I bear the responsibility of granting prosperity and welfare”. This benevolent disposition of the Lord is also well revealed by Sri Annamacharya in the Sankirtana “Podagantimayya Mimmu Purushottama”. That evening,

the Lord rides along with His consorts in a golden chariot called the Sarva-bhoopala Vahana. His control over the chariot symbolizes His sovereign rulership over all the other rulers in this universe.

The morning of the fifth day is known for His appearance as the Mohini Avatara, reminiscent of His disposition to protect devotees. The evening of the fifth day of the festival is made most special by the appearance of the Lord as seated upon the Garuda Vahana.

Garuda - the Embodiment of the Vedas : In the Stotraratna (41), Sri Yamunacharya describes the relationship between the Lord and Garuda as follows-“dasassakha vahanamasanam dhvajo yaste vitanam vyajanam trayimayah”- “Garuda, the embodiment of the three Vedas, is Your servant (dasa), Your friend (sakha), Your vehicle (vahanam), Your seat (asanam), Your flag (dhvaja), Your canopy (vitanam), Your fan (vyajanam)”. In this way, Garuda is also serving the dear most Lord in many ways. However, the appearance of the Lord upon the GarudaVahana has a deep esoteric philosophical significance. It is said that Garuda is the embodiment of the three Vedas (trayimaya), and therefore Garuda’s head represents the crest of the Vedas – the Upanishads. The presence of the Lord upon Garuda signifies that the lofty Upanishads reveal the Supreme Brahman to be none other than the consort of Sree- Lord Narayana. Befittingly, the Lord is decorated with the ornaments of the Druva Bera- called the ‘Chaturbuja Lakshmi Hara’ and ‘Makara Kanti’, for this unique procession. When they behold the magnificent sight of the Lord atop the Garuda Vahana, the Lord’s own words (Gita 15-15) reverberate in the hearts of the devotees- “vedaisca sarvairahameva vedyo”- “I am the only one to be known from the entirety of the Vedas”. Indeed, this is a sight that one must truly behold and experience directly!

Faithful Servant : The sixth day is notable for the Hanuman Vahana procession in the morning and the Gaja Vahana procession in the evening. The sight of Hanuman bearing the Lord on his shoulders is reminiscent of the prowess of Lord Rama, and of His faithful servant Hanuman. In one Sankeertana “O Pavanatmaja” (4-327) Annamacharya wonders- “When the Lord mounted onto you with all the worlds contained in His body, you could indeed bear Him, O Hanuman!”. The Gaja Vahana of the Lord is associated closely with His consort Lakshmi. These celestial elephants are those that bear four tusks and serve the divine couple; and thus, the Lord makes an appearance mounted on the celestial elephant. This scene also certainly reminds a devotee of the vow of protection taken by Lord Hari- the rescuer of the elephant devotee Gajendra.

The Brilliance of Sun & Moon : The seventh day of the festival is known for the Surya Prabha Vahana procession in the morning



SACRED SEVAS

to

Lord Venkateswara

- Dr. G.S.R.K. Babu Rao



Every day is a festival day in Tirumala. There is always festivity enshrining on the holy seven hills. In Tirumala, *sevas* performed to the presiding deity are several and varied. They can be classified into – (i) daily *sevas* (ii) weekly *sevas* (iii) annual *sevas*. Pilgrims can attend some of the *sevas* by paying a prescribed fee; that’s why they are called ‘*Arjit Sevas*’. Almost everyone visiting the holy shrine would like to participate at least in one ‘seva’. But alas! The tickets are very restricted. Let’s have a glimpse of various sacred *sevas* of Tirumala beginning with Suprabatha Seva and culminating in Ekantha Seva in this article. Surely, when devotees seat themselves in front of the ‘*Moolavarlu*’ (Main deity), the etherial experience galvanizes them to an astral pane.

SUPRABHATA SEVA



This is the first seva performed to the presiding deity of Lord Venkateswara. In Tirumala temple, suprabhatam, stotram, prapathi and mangalasasanam, are recited. A descendant of Tallapaka Annamacharya also sings a few of the Sankeertans at that time.

When pilgrims look at the Lord's idol, so radiating is the divine charm and grace of the serene and captivating murti (idol) that they forget themselves and rest of the world.

Suprabhatam is sung before the Bangaru Vakili [golden threshold] after which Bhoga Srinivasa murthy who was laid to bed on the cot is shifted back to the *sanctum sanctorum*. Navaratna aarati is offered to the Lord and a *naivedya* of cow's milk, butter and sugar is offered to the Lord.

The composition of the suprabhatam is supposed to have been done by 'Prativadi Bhayankaram Annan' who ostensibly flourished during the closing years of Sri Vedanta Desika. (Going by the evidence available, it can be surmised that it was started before the beginning of the 15th century. Before that the morning ritual of the temple was only one of silent prayer.) Suprabhata Seva will not be performed in Dhanurmas. 'Tiruppavai' is recited instead.

and the Chandra Prabha Vahana procession in the evening. The significance of the Lord riding in within the orb of the sun and the moon is twofold. First- it reminds us of His own words (Gita 15-12)- "yadadityagatam tejo jagadbhasayate'khilam. yaccandramasi yaccagnau tattejo viddhi mamakam.." – "That brilliance of the sun which illumines the entire universe, that brilliance of the moon and that of the fire- know that brilliance as Mine". This indicates that the Lord is the ultimate source of the luminescence of all luminous bodies. Second, it reminds us of the Lord's two-fold disposition. The lord is beaming with scorching power like that of the sun directed towards the asuras. At the same time, He is beaming with benevolent grace like the moon, which is directed towards devotees. Arjuna therefore address the Lord as – "sasisuryanetram" – "the one who has sun and moon as His eyes" (Gita 11-19).

On the eighth morning, the Lord along with His consorts ascends the golden chariot- the famed Rathotsavam. This Utsavam also carries deep philosophical significance. The Katha Upanishad says (3-3) – "atmanam rathinam viddhi sariram rathameva ca"- "know the self to be the passenger, and the body to be the chariot". The sight of the Lord in this golden chariot therefore reminds us of His presence within the hearts of all creatures, as the antaryami- 'the innermost controller of all'. The final procession of the festival is marked with the ascent of the Lord on the Asva Vahana; on the evening of the eighth day of celebrations. This signifies His future descent as Kalki, taken in order to counter Adharma and destroy it!

The ninth and the last day of the festival involves the performance of a special Snapana Tirumanjanam for the Lord along with His consorts, in the morning, followed by the Chakra-Snana in the sacred waters of the Swami Pushkarini. The formal closure of the festival occurs with the lowering of the Garuda flag- 'Dwajavarohana' during the evening hours of that day.

Blessed indeed are those who are able to witness this 'mahotsava'- the great festival conducted by Brahma himself. May this unique festival continue ceaselessly until the sun and moon shine!

Govinda ! Govinda !!



A SACRED VISIT TO TIRUMALA

- Smt. Radha G. Muralidhar

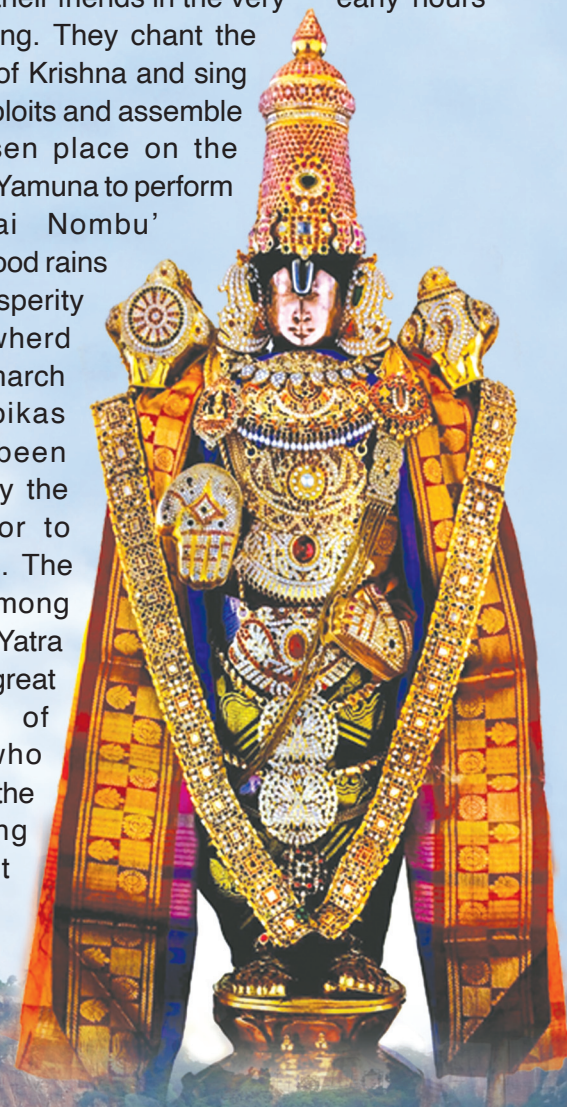
This is the holy month of “Purattasi” (September- October) which marks the sacred day when the Lord Almighty Sriman Narayana descended from his celestial abode to assume the “Archa” form on the seven hills of Thiruvengadam. This Avathara day on the Shravanam asterism is marked with a grand Bramhotsavam of unmatched glory and splendor. The ritual worship of the Utsava moorthy Sri Malayappa Swami and his divine consorts is conducted as per the dictates of the Vaikanasa Agama and the chanting of the Sanskrit Vedas and Tamil Vedas by a huge assembly of scholars led by the Tirumala Jeeyars.

This shrine on the hills from times immemorial has been the most sought after place of pilgrimage to devotees. In the days of yore, when the means of transport were limited, this pilgrimage was a ‘once in a life time’ aspiration, achievement for people who lived far away. But the intense yearning to have darshan transformed into building numerous small shrines to Lord Srinivasa in many small villages for daily adoration and yearly celebration. Others who lived closer to the temple town undertook a ritual annual pilgrimage very often on foot in the company of big groups of devotees. The Saturdays in

particular draw a heavy influx of the faithful who observe penance, sing the glory of the Lord. The entire journey, not only the final moment of darshan, was to be cherished in the hearts for

a long time and narrated with immense enthusiasm to all who were willing to hear and share the joy. Satisfactory completion of the Yatra was celebrated by inviting extended family, neighbors to a grand feast given with the Lord’s prasadam (laddu, theertham).

Sanctity of Pilgrimage in Andal's Tiruppavai : A reference to the sanctity of the pilgrimage to the holy hills is seen in the commentary to Andal’s Tiruppavai. The theme of this hymn is about the damsels of Brindavan going from house to house to gather all their friends in the very early hours of the morning. They chant the holy names of Krishna and sing about his exploits and assemble at the chosen place on the banks of the Yamuna to perform the ‘Paavai Nombu’ praying for good rains to bring prosperity to their cowherd clan. This march of the Gopikas has been compared by the commentator to three Yatras. The very first among them is the Yatra of Akrura, a great devotee of Krishna who had to serve the evil king Kamsa. Out of the



blue Kamsa asked him to bring Krishna and Balarama to Mathura for a wrestling tournament. Akrura had lived in eager anticipation of the day for the darshan of Krishna. All along the way from Mathura to Brindavan, Akrura was brimming with excitement at his great fortune that made what had looked impossible till now happen in a day. The second celebrated Yatra is the ascent of a liberated soul to the celestial world which is the ultimate fruit of a lifetime of Sadhana. The path to the land of permanent bliss is itself fascinating decked up in festive colours. The residents of the celestial world come forward with radiant, glowing faces to welcome the new entrant with all fanfare. The third Yatra is the pilgrimage to the Thiruvengadam hills. In all the three the mission, the journey, the path and the goal merge into an enthralling and unforgettable experience.

Many groups to this day assemble in their native places wearing yellow turmeric dyed clothes as a symbol of their penance and observe strict vratas to purify the body and the mind. The days fly in quick succession and as they approach the hills they encounter hundreds of other groups converging from various directions at the foot of the hills. The joy in their hearts lights up their faces as they hear the rising crescendo of Govinda namam. In many ways what is important is not only the final destination but the entire effort, association with other bhaktas, developing patience, love, respect and physical endurance. They prostrate at the base of the Hills and worship it offering pooja with flowers, betel leaves, coconuts, fruits and light lamps. This is a practice while going to any temple but such worship is unimaginable in the shrine at the hills due to the phenomenal crowds where every microsecond is precious with serpentine queues of people waiting behind us. But the desire to do all this is satisfied by doing this to the holy hills that enshrines the deity.

The trek up is difficult to the elderly and not very fit, as the terrain is long and steep. The younger men and women climb it with the burden of their belongings and small children. Yet the scenic beauty of the hills, the bewitching greenery, the birds, deer sightings that add charm to the slopes, the cloud

bedecked peaks that cool down the body and soul are an altogether elevating experience that make everyone forget all the troubles and enjoy the present. Moving forward to the modern days fast, easy transport has made the hills easily accessible but the crowds have swelled to lakhs on festive days. The wait for the darshan can take hours and one gets almost a split second glimpse of the Lord in the Sanctum Sanctorum. Very often we come out reassuring ourselves that Lord Srinivasa would have seen us even if we couldn't see him to our satisfaction.

During Pandemic Time : The last two years has changed life as we knew it with a pandemic that has swept the world. This disease has taken a severe toll with millions of lives lost causing terrible social, economic and mental trauma. Governments have been compelled to close temples or regulate the crowd to prevent spread of the disease. Many Utsavas have been conducted with only the priests and administrative staff in attendance (Ekantam). The devotees facing these restrictions deprived of the privilege of darshan of their beloved Lord need some alternative outlet to their devotion.

Swami Desikan's 'Hamsa Sandesam' : The poetic fancy of the Alwar saints and the Acharyas enabled them to break the barriers of physical distance and let their imagination take wings to fly to the kshetra. They shared their mystical experiences in timeless poetry. Andal residing in Sri Villiputtur in the far south sent the rain bearing clouds as her messengers to convey her longing for union with the Lord on the



The aerial view of the Thiruvengadam hills stretching like the mighty serpent Adishesha from Tirumala to Srisailam

THOMALA SEVA



This is a most sought after *seva*. The word ‘Thomala’ appears to be a contraction for the Tamil word ‘Thoduttumala’ which means a garland of strung flowers. Abhishekam is performed to the gold covers which adorn the Mula (main) vigraha as well as to Bhoga Srinivasa, while hymns are read out. The garlands to be adorned are kept in a bamboo basket and brought by Jeeyar swami, which are sanitized by sprinkling holy water.

The Lord is then decorated with flowers. The ornately woven garlands will be in several pieces of varying lengths to facilitate spectacular design. That’s why the decoration is so precise. Pilgrims present in the hall, can watch the spectacle of the idol getting decorated step by step, first by garlands and then by ornaments, for around 30 minutes. Abhishek is performed to all the utsav idols placed at the feet of the main idol and also to the Lakshmi Devi, who is entrenched on the bosom of the main idol. The spectacle will not wane for a long to come from the memory of the few fortunate pilgrims who participate in the *seva*.

hills. Swami Desikan’s ‘Hamsa Sandesam’ is in the form of Lord Rama sending a Swan carrying his message to Devi Sita imprisoned in Lanka. The Acharya describes the flight path the swan should take and enjoys the sacred places that will be seen on the way. This work portrays a beautiful, perfect aerial view of the Thiruvengadam hills stretching like the mighty serpent Adishesha from Tirumala to Srisailam. The seven hills are shaped like the head of the serpent and the mountain range extends long like the tail. The Acharya asks the Swan to take a break to enjoy the cool, salubrious cloud laden peaks of the hills. He points out the path by which the pilgrims climb up like a steady lineup of ants and is amazed to see the Devatas come down from their heavenly abode to have darshan of the Lord. The temple is the common ground where everyone comes together to receive the blessings of the Lord.

Brahmotsavam in SVBC : The grace of Lord Srinivasa has now taken new forms in this age of technological revolution. The Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel (SVBC-TTD) brings the hills in all its glory, the Swami Pushkarini-the sacred temple tank, the majestic Rajagopuram that leads us to the shimmering gold inlaid Ananda Nilaya Vimanam to our homes. The entire Brahmotsavam starting with the hoisting of the Garuda flag on the Dvajasthambam, all the Vahana Sevas, special Abhishekams, Vedaparayanam can be enjoyed live at the exact time. Every aspect of the Utsavam, the deities, the decor within can be observed in minute detail which is not possible when we are caught in the jostling crowd. The sights and sounds of the festival, the elaborate running commentaries by scholars are relayed to us in every session. Words fail to capture the emotions in the heart to offer thanks to the administration which has made all this possible and make the devotees feel that they are not missing the Yatra. Though all temples are now going online, the TTD was the precursor having started a dedicated channel many years earlier. The devotees should, in tune with the times, observe the protocol prescribed if they are on the hills and enable the authorities to function without problems. Others should benefit from the television broadcast to enjoy the various Utsavams performed throughout the year. The TTD has also introduced innovative virtual Seva schemes to enable participation in various Pujas from their homes. Let us pray to Lord Srinivasa to shower his blessings on the world and restore peace, well-being and prosperity.



THE GAME with THE LORD

- Prof. P. Raja



“Hm... That’s why I chose to spend some time with you this night, Bavaji!”

Bavaji smiled again and said, “I have all the time for you. Shall we play the game of dice?”

The Lord laughed to His heart’s content and seconds later said, “A good game to free our mind for sometime.”

Balaji and Bavaji rolled the dice in turn and were happy with their progress. They played the game with fun filled laughter.



Bavaji was greatly surprised to see Lord Venkateswara himself standing at the doorstep of his hut.

It was a little past midnight and the time was appropriate for the evil forces to perform their deeds. Yet no iota of doubt rose in Bavaji, as he was an ardent admirer and a distinguished devotee of the Lord.

The very sight of the Lord triggered several questions in Bavaji. But before he could shoot them one after the other, he welcomed the Lord with a big smile and took him inside his hut.

In the dim light of a hurricane lamp hanging from a bamboo rafter, the Lord saw the inside of the hut quite clean and so sat on the floor with a thud before he heaved a sigh.

“What is that sigh for, Balaji?” asked Bavaji.

“Oh, Bavaji! The long long queue of my devotees indeed overwhelms me. They come from far and wide seeking my blessings and I do not disappoint them. From early morning to late evening I have to be present in the temple, all the time standing and no time for rest.”

Bavaji smiled. It took little time for the Lord to decipher it.

“Bavaji! Tell me why of all places you chose this dark, dense forest for your abode?”

“So that I can be quite close to your ‘House of Grace’, Balaji.”

They kept the dice rolling all through the night and were unaware of the time that was rolling by.

A cock crew somewhere in the depth of the forest, and the Lord heaved a sigh.

“What is this sigh for, Balaji?”

“Oh, Bavaji! Another day. It is time to go back. I will have to take my morning ablutions before I answer the genuine prayers of my devotees.”

Without waiting for Bavaji’s words, the Lord disappeared in a trice.

Bavaji was shocked not because the Lord left the hut, but because of that ruby necklace He left in the hut.

The necklace brought a divine smile to his face. He lifted up the necklace and keeping it in his hands, said to himself: “Oh, Balaji! Is this your play?”

SAHASRANAMA ARCHANA



After Thomala Seva, most importantly, archana is performed. In all, archana is done thrice during the day. In the early hours, after Thomala Seva (Sahasra nama Archana) and two more times (Ashtothara nama). A priest, sitting on a wooden stool made in the form of a tortoise, recites 1008 *namas* (names) of the Lord and tulasi leaves are offered to the holy feet. With the same leaves, Vyuha lakshmi on the bosom of the Lord is also worshipped. After this, coconut aarati, nakshatra aarati and camphor aarati are given to the Lord. With this, the Archana Seva ends. Devotees are permitted for darshan then onwards.

Meanwhile the bhattachariyas, finding the ruby necklace of the Lord missing from His neck brought it to the notice of King Krishnadevaraya.

“Catch the thief and bring him to my court,” commanded the king to the deployed security men and spies.

After the daybreak, Bavaji was found rushing to Balaji Temple on the hills. He was holding the long ruby necklace in his hands for everyone to see.

Before he could reach the temple, a guard saw him and took him directly to the king’s court.

King Krishnadevaraya could not believe his ears when Bavaji confessed, “Last night Balaji was in my hut and we enjoyed ourselves playing the game of dice. By dawn he left my hut. Only after he left, I found what he had left. I was carrying this ruby necklace of His only to hand it to my friend Balaji. But this guard intercepted me and brought me to your court.”

No one in the court was ready to believe the words of Bavaji. Yet the king was not ready to punish him. His mind began to waver. After several consultations with his own mind, the king said “Throw him into the prison. Place a big bundle of sugarcane in his cell. He has to finish eating every bit of the bundle this night itself. Let us see if he is a blessed being or a fake.”

Every syllable of the king’s words was honestly obeyed. Bavaji sat in meditation and prayed to Lord Venkateswara for the timely help.

Only the prison authorities knew how long was he in prayer and meditation. But they were all eyes when they saw a mysterious huge elephant enter the problematic cell through its tightly locked gate.

They saw the strange elephant eat all the sugarcane, lock stock and barrel, and disappear as it appeared.

The unexpected scene raised a hue and cry among the inmates of the prison. Bavaji opened his eyes only to see no trace of the sugarcane left in the cell.

This miraculous happening was reported to the king who immediately rushed to the prison. He wanted to beg his pardon by uttering several words in his own inimitable style. Somehow the words got strangled in his throat.

And all that he could manage to say was ‘sorry’ before he released Bavaji. That night too the Lord visited Bavaji and played the game of dice with him.

“You play games very well Balaji,” said Bavaji with a mischievous smile.

The Lord too smiled back and said, “That game I played was to spread your glory and make the public speak of you whenever the topic of my devotees raises its head.”

Bavaji heaved a sigh. Balaji didn’t ask why.

THE FIRST HARATI

After the Suprabathaseva, the first Haarati is given by the descendants of Hathiram Bhavaji.



The Glory of LORD VENKATESWARA

- Smt. M. Indira



Bhakta Sulabha : Generally, it is believed that God is in his heaven quite far away from this world and it is very difficult to reach Him unless one follows an austere course of conduct involving shama, dama, niyama, pratyahara, pranayama, etc. and performs yajnas, yagas and vratas. This may be true of God in his Para, Vyuha, Vibhava, Antaryamin forms, but not in the case of Archavatara. God assumes the form of an image or idol for the sake of humanity and comes within their reach. Lord Vishnu reclines on Adi Sesh in Vaikuntha as His three consorts—Sri Devi, Bhu Devi and Neela Devi gladly press His feet. He has come down to Seshadri on the earth as Lord Venkateswara. He answers the prayers of devotees who worship Him sincerely and wholeheartedly. Hence, He is befittingly called Bhakta Sulabha or Bhakta Varada. It is believed that Brahma, Rudra, Indra, Maruth, Arka and other angels and saints throng the temple of Tirumala to witness the underlying treasure and energy unveiled in the form of Lord Venkateswara.

Divine Significance of the Locale : Every part of Tirumala is miraculous and invested with divine

significance. Though Tirumala is known for its beautiful natural surroundings, it is not proper to visit Tirumala for a pleasure trip to enjoy its scenic beauty. In doing so, we miss the spiritual significance of Tirumala. It is assumed that the angels and saints have become the boulders, brooks, waterfalls, trees and animals on Tirumala to be in close proximity to the Lord and stay blessed either in the animate or inanimate form. That is why, we should regard every part of the locale with great reverence. The entire hill is a boon-giver. One can perceive it if one opens one's "third eye", the inner eye of wisdom with all one's devotional fervor.

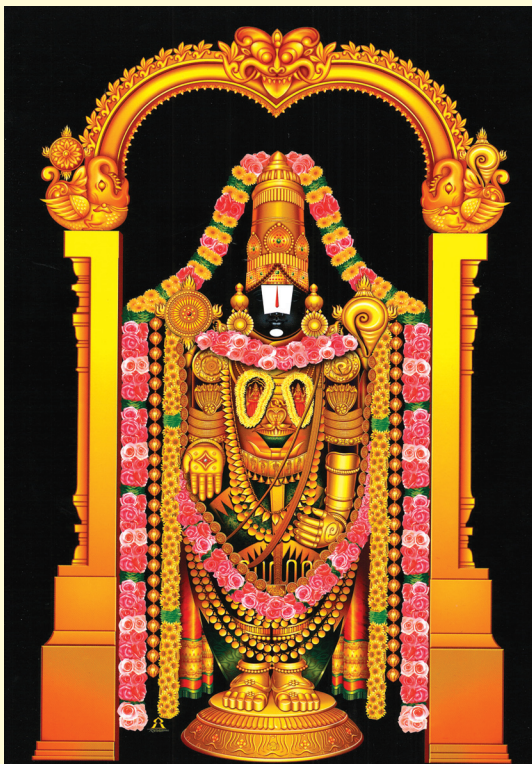
Kundalini Shakti : There are seven hills in Tirumala, namely—Seshadri, Neeladri, Garudadri, Anjanadri, Vrushabhadri, Narayanadri and Venkatadri. They are regarded as the incarnation of thousand-hooded Adi Sesha. Adi Sesha, the serpent-bed of the Lord, is a symbol of Kundalini energy. The seven hills are symbols of its awakening from muladhara chakra through swadhishtana, manipuraka, anahata, vishuddha, ajnya to sahasrara leading to the explosion of wisdom in the form of unlimited brilliance.

Heaven on Earth : Tirumala is regarded as the ultimate heaven, Paramapada, heaven on the earth in Kaliyuga. Lord Venkateswara is regarded as Kalki, the tenth incarnation of God. He is especially here to save the humanity from the evil effects of Kaliyuga. It is said, Kalou Sri Venkata Nayakah. The devotees believe that there is no need to go on a pilgrimage to any place other than Tirumala, because Tirumala is the epitome of all holy shrines. It fulfils all the desires of the devotees. It is believed that there has not been any temple equivalent to Venkatadri in the entire world either in the past or present and there will not be any in future as enunciated in the shloka “Venkatadri samasthanam Brahmande Nastikinchana..”.

Origin of Seshachala: There are a few legends connected to the origin of Seshachala on the earth. According to Varaha Purana, Lord Vishnu incarnates Himself as Adi Varaha and rescues the Earth from Hiranyaksha by killing him. On the plea of Brahma and other angels, He decides to stay on the earth for the welfare of humanity. He orders

Brahma to recreate the world as before. He asks his Vahana Garuda to fetch Kridachala from Vaikuntha and place it on a chosen sacred spot near Suvarnamukhi river. It is to the east of Swami Pushkarini now. This Kridachala is the present Seshachala. Another legend says that once in Dvapara Yuga, Adi Sesha resisted the entry of Wind-God Vayu into Vaikuntha as Lord Vishnu was in solitude with His consort Lakshmi. Angry Vayu challenges Adi Sesha for a duel to test their power. Adi Sesha ties himself to the Meru mountain and asks Vayu to move the mountain, if he can. After a long trial when Vayu seemed to relent, Adi Sesha heaves a sigh and lifts his hood as a sign of victory. Seizing the opportunity, Vayu blows off one of the peaks of Meru which lands near the Swarnamukhi river. Adi Sesha comes down to merge with it on the advice of Vishnu. Thus, the peak of Meru gets the name Seshachalam on which Lord Venkateswara resides.

Five Forms of Vishnu : According to VaicGava theology, VicGu has five forms of manifestation, namely



The Archa Form : Lord Venkateswara is in the archa form on Tirumala in the standing (sthanaka) posture on a lotus pedestal. His eyes have samadrishti, looking straight at the devotees. One can find a slight cheer on His face. Goddess Lakshmi is on His bosom. He holds the weapons chakra (discus) and shankha (conch) in his two upper arms, while the lower right arm is in the varada/abhaya (boon-giving) gesture, and the left arm rests a little above the knee pointing to his feet suggesting saranagati. At first, there used to be some controversy about the identity of this archa form which has nagabharanas on the arms. While Vaishnavas regarded Him as a form of Vishnu, Shaivites considered Him Shiva or Subrahmanya Swami. Shakteyas worshipped Him as Adi Shakti. The credit of resolving this controversy goes to Sri Ramanuja. He established irrevocably that the archa form is of Lord Venkateswara quoting Vedic pramanas and it was universally accepted. A legend says that Sri Ramanuja assumed his serpentine form, slid into the sanctum sanctorum through somasutra and placed discus and conch in the hands of the worship idol to prove his point.

– para, vyuha, vibhava, antaryamin and archa. The para (transcendent) form is Vasudeva, the Supreme Being, beyond the reach of human experience. The vyuha (emanative) form is his functional manifestation as the creator, protector and destroyer of the universe. The vibhava (incarnate) is the physical form in which he descends into the world. The antaryamin (immanent) is the indweller of the jiva. Finally, the archa form is His manifestation in the iconic form receiving ritualistic worship from them in temples and their homes.

Ancient References to the Lord : We find references to Lord Venkateswara in Varaha Purana, Brahmanda Purana, and Bhavishyottara Purana. The first verifiable reference to the place is found in Silappadikaram, a Tamil treatise on grammar. References to the Vengadam hill are found in the Tolkappiyam (fifth century B. C.) and Sangam poet Mamulanar of the second century. A subsequent work of the same century, Ilango Adigal's Silappadikaram, however, refers both to the Vengadam hill and the blue-hued Vishnu who holds the weapons shankha and chakra in his arms. Subsequently, at least ten of the twelve Alvars have sung the praises of the Lord of Tirupati. Many devotees like Annamayya, Purandaradasu, Vengamamba, Tyagaraju and others have sung His glory and resorted to His nama parayana or sankirtana.

Saranagati : One of the best ways of attaining the grace of Lord Venkateswara in Kaliyuga is to seek His absolute saranagati according to Visistadvaita tradition. It is nothing but complete surrender to the Lord with utmost devotion. The devotee approaches the Lord with the feeling of anyatha sharanam nasti, tvameva sharanam mama, no other refuge except His feet. He leaves everything to the will of God without exercising his free will and reveals his paaratantrya (dependence) on the Lord.

Other Precepts of Vishismadvaita : Besides the above, Vishismadvaita advocates glorification of Lord's abhaya hasta (the hand of assurance) and feet, Sripada tirtham (consecrated water of Lord's feet), Tirumani (a kind of white clay used in making the sectarian mark of a Srivaishnava), chakrankitas or mudra (the mark of the discus and the conch pressed on the shoulders of a Srivaishnava), Saranagati (self-surrender or seeking refuge with the Lord), acarya nishmha (commitment to the preceptor), bhagavata nishtha and kainkaryam (commitment and service to the devotees of the Lord), mangalasasanam to the Lord (auspicious benediction upon the Lord) and others.

Let us follow this easy course of conduct prescribed by Sri Ramanuja and receive the bliss of Lord Venkateswara!



KALYANOTSAVAM



The wedding of the celestial couple-- Lord Malayappa Swami along with Sridevi and Bhudevi is performed every day in kalyanotsava mandap which is adjacent to the *sanctum sanctorum*. Pilgrims are seated in the mandap in tidy rows and the kalyan is performed before them. The gotra nama of the couples is taken down and included in the samkalp. Since the seva was introduced by Annamacharya, even today, the 'kanyadaan' is performed by the descendants of the same family. After the wedding rituals, a prasada hamper is given to each of the couples, Just as for a regular kalyan, nadaswara will be performed live. After collecting the prasada hamper, pilgrims are sent for darshan in the queue. At present, during the epidemic time, TTD made this as a virtual seva.

VOWS to Lord Venkateswara

- Sri T. Vikram



Lord Venkateswara is the giver of boons. That is why devotees flock to the Tirumala hills. He showers His grace upon everybody because he is “Sripathi”, Lord of Goddess of Wealth. Goddess Sri Devi resides in his chest. Her benevolent glance makes Lord Srinivasa fulfill all the Dharmic desires of the devotees.

But why do devotees undertake different vows for fulfillment of their wishes in Tirumala? We see tonsuring, Tulabharam (equal weighing), Angapradakshina (circumbulating) and many more undertaken by devotees. It is because, their wishes are fulfilled.

Climbing the Hill

The most common of these vows is, climbing the hill on foot. It takes approx. around 3.5 to 4hrs to climb the hill from Alipiri. The first half an hour is a bit steep but after that it is normal. Lot of facilities like shelter, water arrangements are made for the devotees by the TTD. A few climb the hill by applying turmeric and vermilion to each of the steps; others climb by doing “Namaskaram” (salutation) to each step. Everybody, however, chants the divine name of “Govinda”. The Lord gives them the necessary strength to succeed in their effort. He will be with the devotees all through till His Darshan. There are around 3550 steps on the whole and the pilgrims have to cover a distance of approximately 12kms to complete the foot path way. It is also believed that Sri Ramanujacharya climbed the hill on his knees as he did not want to step on the holy hill with his feet. One should not wear any footwear to climb the hill. There is also another foot path way 'Srivari Mettu' from Srinivasa Mangapuram near Tirupati. Let's chant Govinda and climb now to reach Tirumala!

Kalyanakatta (Tonsuring centre)

Kalyanakatta is a sacred place. Often we see people coming from Tirumala having their heads tonsured. It is one of the ways of shedding their ego. Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have arranged many centres of tonsure which are tidy. Bathing facilities are also available at free of cost. Tonsuring is done free of cost by experienced barbers round the clock. Many offer first tonsuring of children on Tirumala. Thus, the practice seems to prevail from ancient days.

Tulabharam (Equal Weighing)

An incident in the life of Satyabhama opens up her eyes to the nature of true Bhakti as evidenced in Rukmini Devi. Once, she undertakes Punyaka vrata involving patidana (donating husband) on the suggestion of

Sage Narada to keep her husband always in her control. She thought that she can take back her Lord after weighing Him with an equal quantity of wealth. Accordingly, Satyabhama gives Lord Krishna in charity to Sage Narada. In the tulabharam she fails to weigh Him with all her wealth and materials. The Lord weighs when Rukmini places a sacred basil twig in the balance with all her sincere prayers. Satyabhama in all her regret realizes that Lord cannot be weighed with gold or money but only through absolute devotion. In Tirumala one can offer coins, sugar candy, sugar, jaggery etc. (according to their vow) equal to one's weight. Devotees consider it a great opportunity. They continue to chant the name of "Govinda" in the process of weighing so that the Lord would accept their offering. Recently, TTD started Tulabharam in Sri Padmavathi Ammavari Temple, Tiruchanur also for the sake of devotees.

Angapradakshinam

"Anga" means parts of body. "Pradakshina" means going around the temple. It is carried out by rolling on the floor around the temple. TTD issues the tickets for this. But at present due to covid, tickets are not being issued. One must take the ticket, bathe in Pushkarini and wear traditional clothes and do it in wet clothes around Ananda Nilayam chanting "OM Namo Venkatesaya" or "Govinda" early in the morning while Suprabhata Seva goes on for the Lord in the main shrine. Devotees believe that, one who perform this seva will be get rid of sorrows / miseres etc.

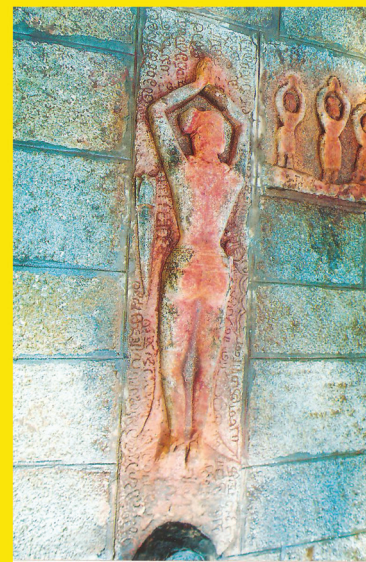
Niluvu Dopidi (Complete Offering)

It is a practice of offering all the ornaments on one's body to Lord Venkateswara. Devotees vow to undergo niluvu dopidi when they are in utmost distress to save them from the crisis. It is "Saranagathi" taking the sole refuge at Lord's feet. Ladies wear "Yellow thread as Mangala sutra" to offer the golden Mangalasutra to the Lord.

Srivari Hundi

Offering money, ornaments or what ever according to their wish tied in yellow cloth and dropped in Srivari Hundi as part of their vow is an ancient practice to fulfil their wishes.

There are also customs like coconut breaking, contributing to Akhanda Deeparadhana, offering of cradle\swing if one begets children by the grace of the Lord. During the Tamil month "Puratassi", many devotees light lamps made of rice flour, ghee and jaggery (called Jyothi) to Lord Srinivasa on Saturdays or during "Thiruvonam" which is auspicious for Lord Venkateswara. They believe that Lord Srinivasa has visited their house to



VASANTHOTSAVAM



This is an abridged ceremony of annual festival held in a separate mandap located outside around 10.00 am. It was introduced during the period of King Achyutaraya in the 1460s. This seva is done to Swamy and his consorts are playfully smeared with chandan and sprinkled aromatic water as a mark of spring heralding. The Annual Vasanthotsavam is performed in Tirumala on the auspicious days of Trayodasi, Chaturdasi and Pournami in the month of Chaitra (March/April) every year. On the first two days Malayappa Swamy and his consorts are given aromatic bath and on the concluding day, Lord Sri Rama with Sita, Lakshmana and Anjaneya and Sri Krishna with Rukmini and Satyabhama are also taken out in a procession along with Malayappa Swamy and His consorts.

bless them with prosperity. Some Companies offer their latest vehicles to the Lord for Dharmic purpose. Some donate their land or house to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam. Devotees according to their vow, offers the things according to their wishes.

Many Kings in olden days offered diamond-studded crowns, and many ornaments too.

Lord Venkateswara does not expect anything from his devotees other than pure devotion. But devotees feel blessed when they offer something or the other to the Lord. Lord Srinivasa accepts whatever the devotee sincerely gives—big or small, and blesses them. Who else we can approach other than the Lord of Seven Hills for fulfilment of our desires?

**Sri VaikuntaVirakthaya Swami PushkariniTade
RamayaRamamanayaVenkatesaya Mangalam!**



NAVARATHRI

'Navarathri' is a nine day festival celebrated all over the country. During this time, Goddess durga is worshipped marks the day celebrating victory over evil. Navarathri is celebrated in the aswayuja month of the Indian Lunar Calendar (between September and October).



Navarathri is also called Dasara, this festival is celebrated for nine days, hence, the name Navarathri. Goddess Durga in 9 forms is worshipped each day as – Shailaputri – Daughter of mountain, Brahmacharini – Symbolizing austerity, Chandraganta – An embodiment of beauty of bravery, Kooshmanda – the creative power of the universe, Skandamatha – Mother of skanda, Kathyayani – Symbolizing courage, Kalarathri – Power to destroy ignorance, Mahagowri – Who stands for intelligence and peace, Siddhidathri – One who grants all siddhis.

Among the nine days, Durgashtami, Mahanavami and Vijayadasami is considered auspicious to start any learning. Let us pray Goddess Durga and seek her blessings during this Navarathri festival.

Navarathri utsavams from 06-10-2021 to 15-10-2021

SAPTHAGIREESA GOVINDA

- Dr. C.V. Sulochana

The Sanskrit word 'Saptha' refers to the number Seven. It is indicated in various names as - 7 days in a week, 7 colors in rainbow, 7 horses of the Sun God, 7 chakras including sahasrara in upasana, 7 swaras in music, 7 steps during marriage, 7 upper lokas, 7 lower lokas, 7 hills (Tirumala).

Moreover, the number 7 has a great connection with Lord Venkateswara, the presiding deity of Tirumala in many ways. Let us examine how it is.

Tirumala kshetra is located in the midst of a group of seven sacred hills called 'Sapthagiri'. In Venkatachala Mahatyam these seven hills are said as seven heads of Adishesha (the king of serpents). The seven peaks or the heads are called with the names – 1. Seshadri 2. Vrisardri 3. Garudadri 4. Anjanadri 5. Vrishabhadri 6. Narayanadri 7. Venkatadri. Hence Lord Venkateswara swami is also being called – Edukondalavada Govinda (the resident of seven hills) and Saptagireesa Govinda (the king

of Seven Hills).

The seventh day of the week is Saturday. It is a very worshipping Lord Venkateswara. As per Vedic astrology associated with a planet in the solar system. In that of Saturday. Once Lord Venkateswara swami had taken bhagavan that he would never trouble his devotees. Venkateswara swami on Saturdays with a lot of of obstacles caused by

auspicious day for every day of the week is way Shani (Saturn) is the Lord a promise from Shani Hence the devotees worship devotion and dedication to get rid Shani bhagavan.

Among all the month of - in Shravana Shravana

Saturdays, Saturdays that come in Shravana are very important because masam the full moon day occurs in star. Hence this month is called Shravana masam. Moreover, Shravana star is the birth star of Sri Venkateswara swami. This nakshatra comes under Makara rasi (Capricorn). The Lord of Makara rasi is Shani bhagavan (Saturn). The seven saturdays vratam is also observed by some devotees during this month itself.

The four Saturdays in the Tamil month of purattasi are also considered very auspicious for worshipping Lord Venkateswara. During this month the Sun will be in Virgo, the zodiac Sign ruled by Mercury. The Lord of Mercury is Vishnu, the God of wealth

and prosperity. Also it is known from the legend that Lord Vishnu descended to this earth as Sri Venkateswara during this Tamil month purattasi itself. Hence these Saturdays are called Vishnu Saturdays or Tirumala Saturdays (Tirumala Shanivaralu in Telugu).

One very Saturday of purattasi month the devotees observe fasting and light lamp (a lamp made of rice flour, jiggery and ghee) and do Govinda bhajans. Later they offer the 7 favourable dishes- sweet pongal (jiggery rice), hot pongal (pepper rice), tamarind rice, curd rice, vada, laddu, sundal (boiled channa) to Lord Venkateswara Swami for his divine blessings.

Celebrated for nine days

The seventh month of Telugu calendar is called Aswayuja masam. Tirumala brahmotsavam is an annual festival performed to Lord Venkateswara Swami, celebrated for nine days every year during this month in such a manner that the utsavam should be concluded on Shravana nakshatra. Of course another brahmotsavam will also be organized at Tirumala when there will be an Adhikamasam (extra month) during Navarathri. During this nine day festival, Lord Malayappa swami (processional deity) along with his consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi go in procession two times (morning and night) daily on vahanams.

Rathasapthami

Maghasuddha sapthami (the seventh day in the brighter phase of lunar cycle of Telugu month Magha) of every year is celebrated as Rathasapthami. It is symbolically represented in the form of Sun

God Surya turning his Ratha (chariot), drawn by seven horses with Aruna as the charioteer towards the northern hemisphere in north eastern direction. This day also marks the Birth of Surya and hence celebrated as Surya jayanthi. Basing on this one day brahmotsavam called 'Mini Brahmotsavam' is organized at Tirumala. On this day Lord Malayappaswami will proceed on saptha (seven) Vahanams through the holy streets around the temple. It is a big chance to the devotees to have the darshan of Sri Malayappa swami on seven vahanams in a single day itself.

In astrology every planet is allotted a number. As per that seven is a Ketu number. Ketu is planet of obstruction. The Lord of Ketu is Lord Ganesha. Soon we should worship Lord Ganesha to overcome the obstacles created by Ketu. People believe that different incarnations taken in previous yugas by Sri Venkateswara Swami represent the different planets in their tattwa (nature). Hence, they worship the following incarnations to get the relief from planetary troubles.

Ketu-Matsyavatara, Saturn-Koormavatara, Rahu-Varahavatara, Mars-Narasimhavatara, Jupiter-Vamanavatara, Venus-Parusuramavatara, Sun-Ramavatara, Moon-Krishnavatara, Mercury - Kalki is an avatar to be taken by Lord Venkateswara at the end of Kaliyuga. Till then He resides on these seven hills in the form of Archamurthy (idol form) and protects the people from troubles of Kali, a demon.

What a lucky number seven is! We too associate with Lord Venkateswara Swami in every possible way for his divine grace.



TIRUPPAVADA SEVA

The seva will be performed on Thursdays from 7.00 am to 7.30 am to the main deity. Pulihora Prasad specially made for this seva will be offered to God at Gantamandapam on a silver peetam (Tiruppavada Peetam). TTD Vedaparayanamdar will recite Padmavathi Amma Gadhya. After that all the grihasthas (participating couples) will be allowed for darshan. Jilebi + Tenithola, special Prasad will be given to the ticket holders.



Venkatachalam in VEDIC AND PURANIC LITERATURE

- Sri Atthi Rangarajan

The divine seven hills of Venkatachala have a hoary past and are a repository of ancient knowledge, having been mentioned in various Vedas and Puranas. There are major references to Sapthagiri or Venkatachala hill ranges.

Rig Veda, the oldest text, has the first mention of the Tirumala hills. The verse 1-164-50 of Rigveda states thus: Devathas once descended on the earth to perform Yajna on Tirumala hills. Since earth is the only Karma bhumi and no other Loka gives the intended benefit (Phala) of performing a sacrifice, the divine beings descended on earth and found Tirumala suitable for their Yajna.

In an interesting observation, there is a mention of Sapthagiri (seven hills) in Taittiriya Samhita of Krishna Yajurveda (Kaanda VI, Prapaathaka II, Anuvaaka IV). The reference to the hills is made in the form of a casual mention in a dialogue between Yajna Vishnu and Indra. The verse points to Sacrifice (Yajna) running away from the gods and coming to the earth by assuming the form of Vishnu. The gods followed him and tried to catch him with their outstretched hands. Only Indra managed to reach him. An enraged Yajna Vishnu wondered who was the person trying to obstruct him. They both entered into a wordy duel on who was powerful, when Yajna Vishnu challenged Indra to strike the Varaha (the boar)

hiding beyond the 'seven hills' after having stolen the wealth of Gods. Indra struck Varaha with a 'Darbha' grass and at the same time, Yajna Vishnu drew all wealth from Varaha and handed it over to the Gods. This same story is mentioned even in Krishna Yajurveda Maitrayaniya Samhita and Kaathaka Samhita.

Requested for Shelter : One may get a doubt if the seven hills mentioned in above were the same Tirumala hills we are talking about now. According to Venkatachala Mahatmyam in Varaha Purana, Yajnamurti Varaha was the first to come to Tirumala along with Goddess Earth. On descending from his celestial abode later, Lord Vishnu as Sri Venkateswara came later to the seven hills and requested Varaha for shelter. This shows that the seven hills of Tirumala could exactly be the same as mentioned in the Veda.

The seven hills collectively called 'Venkatachala' comprise Sri Saila, Seshasaila, Garudachala, Venkatadri, Narayanadri, Vrishabhadradi and Vrishadri, as mentioned in Sri Venkateswara Suprabhata Stotra. Not just as Venkatachala, the hills have also been individually mentioned in several Puranas. For example, Seshasaila is mentioned in Bhrahmanda Purana and Bhavishyottara Purana in the form of a sloka referring to its existence. The story goes like this: Vayu and Adi Sesha were given a test by Maha Vishnu, as part of which



the two were required to bring it to Earth. Sesa draped himself around the Venkatachala, considered as the son of the famed Meru Parvatha, and uprooted it, while Vayu blew a heavy gale, which lifted the mountain and brought it to the banks of River Swarnamukhi. It is referred as 'Sasesha Gamanaachaapi Seshadrim Praahurutthamaa' (Brahmanda Purana 1 – 10).

Garudachala - Varahapurana : Similarly, Varaha Purana (1 – 36 – 5) refers to Garudachala in a sloka, according to which Garuda, as instructed by Varaha Murti in the Svetha Varahakalpa, lifted the Kridadri hill from the heavenly abode Sri Vaikuntha and put it on the banks of river Swarnamukhi, which in the contemporary context, can be taken as a direct reference to our own Tirumala hills. Since it was brought by Garuda, the hill came to be known as 'Garudachala'.

There is an interesting twist to the reference of Venkatadri in the Puranas. 'Vem' and 'Kata' are known respectively as nectar (signifying health) and opulence (signifying wealth). The meaning is that devotees praying at the Venkata hills are assured of health and wealth. However, a sloka in Bhavishyothara Purana (1 – 220 – 221) mentions Vem as 'the lethal sins' and 'Kata' as their elimination. The second explanation gained prominence after Venkatadri started becoming a famous pilgrim centre (Punyasthala).



Narayanadri - Brahmanda Purana : Narayanadri has a reference in Brahmanda Purana. The sloka (3 – 46 – 48) refers to a Brahmin who performed a rigorous penance at Srivari Pushkarini on the hills to propitiate Lord Narayana. When Narayana appeared before him, he appealed to the Lord to get one of the hills named after Himself. That is how Narayanadri got its name.

Vrishabhadri : Vrishabhadri owes its name to a verse in Brahmanda Purana (4 – 45). Once Vrishabhasura was residing in the southern end of the hill ranges, when Lord Srinivasa came face to face with the demon. After a serious fight, the demon was killed by the Lord. It was then that Vrishabhasura came to know that the person who had killed him was none other than Lord Narayana. Minutes before his death, he requested the Lord to get the hill named after him so that the world would remember him along with his slayer Lord Narayana.

Vrushadri : Though the name Vrushadri appears similar to Vrishabhadri, it is a different hill. There are divergent versions in the Puranas about the hills. Bhavishyottara Purana takes both Vrusha and Vrishabha hills as in one connotation. The verse 1 – 36 – 37 of Bhavishyottara Purana calls Vrushadri as the name of the hill in Krutha Yuga, which came to be known as Anjanachala in Treta Yuga, as Seshasaila in Dwapara Yuga and finally as Venkatachala in Kali Yuga. This refers to the same hill range that gained prominence by different names among the local population, as time passed by.

However, the line 'Vrishabhadri Vrushadri Mukhyam' in Suprabhata Stotra records both the names in a single sentence, indicating that they are indeed different hills. Vrusha is another name for Dharma. Dharma is said to have performed penance on this hill for its own advancement, which is why it came to be known as Vrushadri.

This goes to show that Venkatachala hills have not become famous after Sri Venkateswara temple shot to prominence, as some tend to think, but the ancient hill ranges existed even during the Vedic and Puranic times.



Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams



Tirumala

Sri Venkateswaraswamivari Brahmotsavams
From 07-10-2021 to 15-10-2021



08-10-2021

Friday

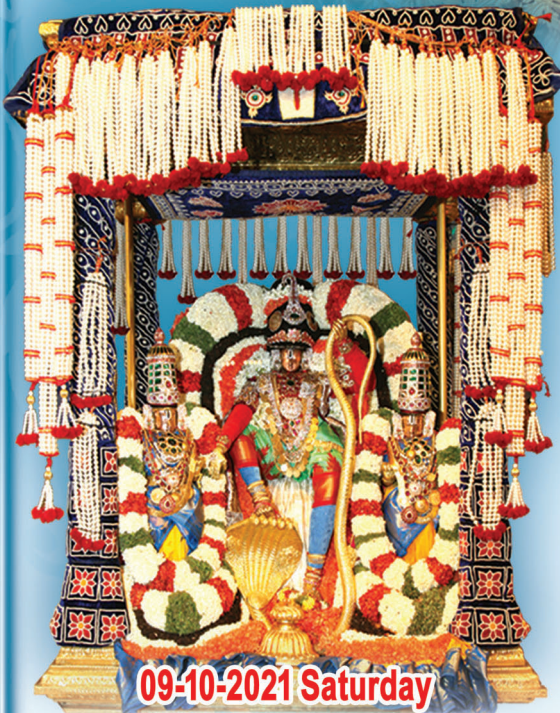
Night : Hamsavahanam



09-10-2021

Saturday

Day: Simhavahanam



09-10-2021 Saturday

Night : Muthyapupandirivahanam



10-10-2021 Sunday

Day: Kalpavrukshavahanam

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams



Tirumala
Sri Venkateswaraswamivari Brahmotsavams
From 07-10-2021 to 15-10-2021

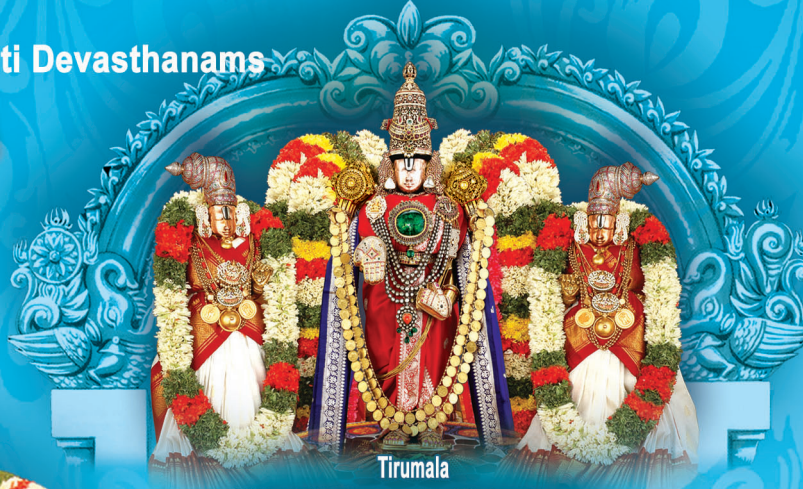
11-10-2021
Monday
Day : Mohini Avataram
in Pallaki



10-10-2021
Sunday
Night :
Sarvabhupalavahanam



Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams



Tirumala

Sri Venkateswaraswamivari Brahmotsavams
From 07-10-2021 to 15-10-2021

12-10-2021

Tuesday

Day:

Hanumadvahanam



12-10-2021

Tuesday

Night :

Gajavahanam



Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams



Tirumala
Sri Venkateswaraswamivari Brahmothsavams
From 07-10-2021 to 15-10-2021



13-10-2021
Wednesday
Day:
Suryaprabhavahanam

13-10-2021
Wednesday
Night :
Chandraprabhavahanam



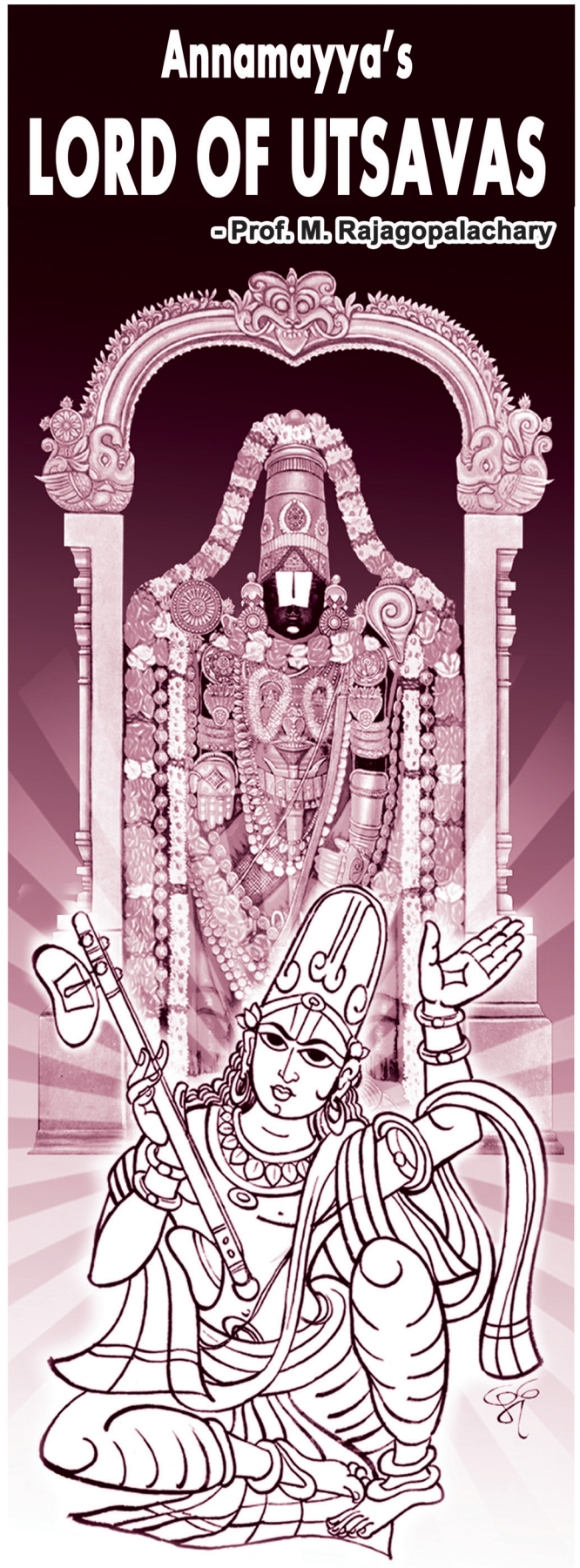
Annamayya is regarded as the *Andhra Padakavita Pitamaha* and *Hari Sankirtanacharya* having written thirty-two thousand padas/ sankirtanas on Lord Sri Venkateswara. He seems to believe that Lord Venkateswara of the Seven Hills is the Kalki incarnation of Lord Vishnu who descended on the earth to protect His devotees and uphold dharma. He sang of the innumerable auspicious qualities of the Lord in his sankirtanas in tune with the dictum of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, '*sankirtanam bhagavato gunakarma naamnaam*' (singing the names, qualities, and miraculous deeds of the Lord is sankirtana).

Annamayya's life is inextricably linked with Tirumala and its Lord. For him it is a sacred heaven, *Paramapada* and *Vaikuntha* on the earth. Situated on the *Adishesha*, it is a symbol of *Kundalini* energy. Each and every particle of Tirumala is divine for him. All the angels, gods, goddesses and saints have come down to the Seven Hills assuming whatever shape they can like the boulders, trees, waterfalls, brooks and animals.

Annamacharya took refuge in the holy feet of Lord of Tirumala and donated to the temple whatever he earned from the patrons and kings unasked. He instituted a number of utsavas for the Lord and used to personally supervise them during his life-time with intense devotion. It appears his descendants are given due representation in some of the utsavas and services like *suprabhata seva*, *pavalimpu seva*, etc. He wrote a number of sankirtanas on Lord Venkateswara's Brahmothsavas also as he knew very well that the Lord Venkateswara exulted in the utsavas.

Vahana Sevas described by Annamayya

In "*Tiruveedhula merasee devadevudu...*," he says: "Here outshines the Supreme Lord with pomp and glory in the holy streets of Tirumala!" in connection with the Brahmothsavas. The Lord comes out of the sanctum sanctorum into the streets in all His splendor to give His blissful darshan to the devotees on these ceremonial days, while the latter have to go through long queues for a glimpse of the Lord on the other days. He describes the daily vahana sevas of the Lord in a serial order. The Lord goes on



various vahanams on all Brahmotsavam days. We find these *Vahana Sevas* described by Annamayya carried out by TTD even today with great pomp and glory.

The Lord is woken up every day in the early hours with auspicious singing of *Suprabhatam* amidst sonorous music of trumpets. Annamayya entreats the Lord thus in “*Medini jivulagava melukovayya!*”:

Wake up, O Lord Venkatesha!

To protect the creatures on the earth.

Your grace itself is our safe haven!!

In “*Vinnapalu vinavale vinta vintalu...*” he appeals to the Lord:

“Listen to our strange supplications, O Lord!
Why don’t you lift the mosquito-net of Adisesha
and wake up?

There is no end to the wishes and desires of the beings engulfed in the worldly life. Sometimes they are strange and even ludicrous. God alone can pay heed to fulfill them because He is a treasure of abundant compassion. In “*Meluko shringararaya meti madana gopala,*” he pleads:

Wake up, O Matchless Romantic Lord Krishna!
Wake up! O my overwhelming treasure!

It is not only devotees who participate in the *Suprabhata Seva* of the Lord, but Brahma, Rudra, Indra, Garuda, and the retinue of angels wait at His doorstep as Tumburu and Narada sing His glory in melodious tunes.

Sacred bath

Annamayya describes the thousandfold graces of Lord Venkateswara during the holy bathing ceremony on Friday in “*Choodaramma ide nedu sukkuraramu*”. The Lord is bathed in rose water as auspicious trumpets blow. Daubed with camphor, He looks like a pearl burnished. He appears like a black cloud daubed with choice musk. Decked with gold ornaments all over His body, He sparkles like gold in all His splendor. He has made His chest the abode of wealth by placing Alamel Manga on it. Standing high on Venkatadri, He looks like the series of Seven Hills Himself.

Today is Friday.

Let us go to see the thousand-fold graces of
The holy bath given to the Lord!!

Devotees forget themselves witnessing the beauty of the Lord in a waist cloth (*snana koupina*).

He compares the Lord with a black bee, fresh pure white jasmine, pearl burnished, black cuckoo with camphor flavor and treasure for the believers in sankirtanas like “*Kanti shukravaaramu ghadiyaledinta*” and “*Deva dundubhulatoda tetatellamainaadu*”.

Lord Venkateswara is adorned as a new bridegroom almost daily. There are many sankirtanas of Annamayya on the *Kalyanotsavam* of the Lord who finds a befitting match in the enchanting Alamel Manga. She competes with Him in every aspect with her regal glory. In the *shobhanam* song (“*nede pellivela nede nagavelli*”), he says:

Today is the marriage and concluding
ceremony of Nagavelli.

Sing auspicious sobaana songs,
O maids, in a playful mood!

A grand reception is arranged for the new brides—Sridevi and Bhudevi into the in-laws’ house of Lord Venkateswara (“*Nede nagavelli nede illunimpulu ...*”). The Lord has fixed Goddess Indira on His chest as “*nityanapayini*”, inseparable even for a moment (“*Dharunee pathikini talambralo bahu...*”).

Annamayya narrates the gliding raft festival of the Lord and His consorts in the Holy Lake (*Swami Pushkarini*). He pays rich tributes to the lake as it sanctifies the worlds. He finds in it the gateway to heaven (“*Devuniki devikini teppala konetamma*”).

Oh! Lord! Farewell to you

The Brahmotsavas begin with the *Devataahvaanam* and *Dhvajaarohanam*, and conclude with *Dhvajaavarohanam*. Annamayya bids farewell to all the angels who graced the utsavas in the composition, “*Bhogeendrulunu meeru poyirandu ...*”. He, however, wants them to come back for the next annual Brahmotsavas.

Farewell to you, O Narada, Sanaka,
Sanandana and others

Of great glory

But don’t you go away very far;

Come to the Venkatadri to serve the Lord again.

In “*Niddirinchee paalajalanidhi valene...*” and “*Jo Achyutananda Jojo Mukunda! Raave Paramaananda Raama Govinda!!*” we witness the “*Pavalimpu Seva*” (Ekantha Seva) of the Lord in the golden swing singing melodious lullabies.

Annamacharya's descendants sing a lullaby of Annamacharya to the Lord by participating in this Seva even today.

There are a number of Annamayya sankeertanas on the *vahanas* of the Lord like *Garuda*, *Hanuman*, *Ashwa* and *Sesha* with or without reference to the utsavas of the Lord. A glimpse of the Lord on Garuda is supposed to grant all our desires in this life and redemption from earthly bonds at the end. Annamayya describes the terrific movement of the Lord on Garuda in a spectacular manner in the keertana "*itu garudani neevekkinanu...*" As the Lord boards Garuda, the heavens resound and all the directions explode with a thud to the terror of the giants. The worlds get panic-stricken. At the same time, the Lord presents a pleasant sight as Garuda's Flag is hoisted for His marriage ceremony (*Garudadhvajambekke Kamalaakshu pendliki*). Goddess Saraswathi and Girija sing sobana songs. Rambha, Urvashi and other damsels dance in the ceremony. The angels pour a rain of flowers on the Lord from above and blow trumpets. The Lord is praised as *Garudagamana*, *Garudachalapathi* and *Garudadhvaja*.

Annamayya pays tribute to the awe-inspiring form of Hanuman who always serves Rama and Lakshmana as a vahana: "Look how gigantic grew Hanuman! Greatly learned in all fine arts!" (*Periginadu choodaro pedda Hanumanthudu*). A great devout, he has fixed Sri Rama always in his heart. He is an *ekanga veera* who rules the entire world ("*Elavayya lokamella yitte ramudeevenache*"). Annamayya exhorts him, Rule this entire world with Lord Rama's blessings O blue-hued Hanumanta! You are our saviour!

Born of the aspect of Rudra, he is designated to be the future Brahma and he becomes another name for Vishnu by killing all the giants. Thus, he is endowed with the power of Trinity of Gods. There is no match for Hanuman in this world (*Okkade ekanga veerudurviki daivamounaa...*).

As the Lord proceeds on the *Ashwa Vahana*, He appears multiplied in thousands of forms with all his weapons.

As you dashed on a horse with lightning speed
You created an illusion of thousands of forms
To the awe-struck enemies.

His weapons—the conch, the discus, the bow, the mace and the sword flash like ten thousand images of the Sun. Adishesha is His armour. Goddess Lakshmi is His treasure. Vishvaksena who darts into the battleground like a comet radiates like a spear in His hand. Goddess Lakshmi behind him appears like Jaya Lakshmi prodding him to victory with her romantic grace coupled with valour (*Nivu turagamu mida nerpumeraya ...*).

The carriage of *Adi Sesa* is given the crowning place in the *Brahmotsavas* of Tirumala. In "*Veedugade sesudu sri Venkatadri sesudu...*", Annamayya glorifies Adishesha who serves the Lord as the bed. The Serpent God is here in the form of Seven Hills, especially Seshadri. With his thousand mouths and two thousand tongues he is an expert singer of the glory of the Lord. He is ever eager to serve the Lord and never evades his work. Hence, all the angels first bow down to him for his valour and service to the Lord. Annamayya exemplifies his devotion for the Lord in the form of *sakhya* and *dasya bhakti*.

Annamayya seems to suggest that rituals offered mechanically without heart in it are of no use. God is antaryami, the indwelling spirit. Hence, the devotee's body should become a temple, head the tower, heart the seat of Hari and word the mantra (*nityapoojalivigo nerichiti noho*). Thus, Annamayya makes us feel the glory and grandeur of the Lord's utsavas through his sankirtanas in an unforgettable way.



Sri Padmavati Ammavari Navaratri Utsavams



The delight of the devotees is the joy of the Lord. The annual 'Navaratri Utsavams' in all aspects will attract and promote devotion in the hearts of devotees. May Goddess Padmavathi Devi shower Her abundant grace on us. Sri Padmavati Ammavari Navaratri Utsavams from 06.10.2021 to 15.10.2021.



Srinivasa Kalyanam, the celestial marriage, is a grand event performed everyday by the learned Archakas of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams. Devotees throng to participate personally in this event every day. During these hard times of Covid pandemic, the TTD has arranged for participation in it online (virtual participation) and all other devotees eagerly await everyday to view this programme on live TV telecast. This event is the most absorbing, colourful, pious, and auspicious. The marriage rituals are conducted as per the scriptures in a most methodical manner. It is a cynosure to the eyes of the devotees. There is a practice in some households today to postpone their lunch till the majestic event is over on the SVBC channel run by TTD.

Kalyanam Ritual

Lord Srinivasa and His Consorts, Sridevi and Bhoodevi, are adorned with ornaments, flower garlands and captivating clothes before the performance of the marriage event. The devotees watch the same with wide-open eyes and feel

blessed. The couple participating in the event assume the role of Akasa Raja and Dharani, the parents of Padmavathi Devi and feel they are doing kanyadana to Lord Srinivasa. They rejoice in ecstasy when they recite the mantra, “*mama kanyam kanaka sampannam kanakaa bharana bhushitham dasyami, Vishneve thubhyam brahmaloka jigeeshayaa*” “*Kanyam salamkritam sadhveem susilaya sudheemathe prayathnoyam prayachhami dharma kaamardha siddaye.*” “My daughter well-decorated with gold ornaments is being offered to you so that I will attain the realm of Brahma Lokam. She would be the perfect companion to You in performing Your righteous duties”. Lord Srinivasa accepts them as His consorts and gives them a place on His chest.

Marriage Expenses

Sri Mahalakshmi deserted Lord Vishnu when Bhrgu Maharishi offended her by kicking on Lord Vishnu’s chest where Sri Mahalakshmi is seated. Vishnu followed her to the earth with all his riches, wealth, prosperity gone. He wandered without

shelter in search of his consort. He was taken care of by Vakula maata. But when his marriage was decided with Padmavathi, daughter of a King, how could He match them in their status and wealth? He borrowed huge amounts from Kubera on the commitment that He would pay interest from the offerings of his devotees and the Principal amount will be paid at the end of Kaliyuga. Lord Shiva, Brahma and Aswattha Tree stood as witnesses to this agreement. It now fell to the share of the devotees that they repay His debt by offering 'vaddikasulu' (one who collects interest) whenever their wishes are fulfilled.

Significance of Kalyana Mahotsavam

Sri Maha Lakshmi represents the jeevatma, the soul that has all the attributes of a materialistic soul, anger, pride and desires. Sri Maha Vishnu represents Paramatma [the Supreme Soul] devoid of all these. Though Sri Maha Lakshmi left Vishnu, she would always desire to merge with paramatma. She can never live separated. She is nityanapayini. The performance of Kalaynam indicates that

jeevatma unites with paramatma so that the Supreme parents can bless the devotees. The Lord also wants his devotees to remember that their goal is to attain the abode of the Lord.

This also reminds every devotee that marriage is not a union of two people, but a structure built so that the society evolves with good morals, doing righteous things and promoting the welfare and well-being of the society without any disparity of social status, creed and colour. It also reveals the concept of “*Vasudhaika kutumbam*”, that the world is one family as evidenced in the gathering of different devotees to celebrate the Kalyanam of the Lord everyday.

One of the nine forms of Bhakti to attain the divine feet of the Lord is “*smarana bhakti*” (remembering the Lord all the time). By participating in the celestial marriage, each devotee dips himself into the ocean of devotion by chanting, Govinda, Govinda.

Vasudhaika Kutumbakam



KALYANAMANDAPA

In Tirumala, the spacious Kalyana Mandapa in the south-west corner of the Vimana Pradakshina is well known and very famous for its exquisite sculptures. Judging from the style of the architecture and some of the sculptures this was perhaps built in the 15th century A.D. The Kalyanotsavams were being performed here till a few years ago. The four pillared central mandapa within the Kalyana Mandapa is a marble and a masterpiece of artistic skill. It is made of very highly polished black granite and the wealth of details and the exquisite and delicate workmanship here makes it one of the greatest masterpiece of Vijayanagar art. The flexible kodungu, the sharply cut pushpabhadrika-punumai corbel with its beautiful stoop, the lovely miniature sculptures that adorn all the facets of the pillars lend to it an exquisite charm and delicacy that makes it probably the greatest masterpiece of the Vijayanagar workmanship. In addition this contains many reliefs showing many interesting scenes.



Courtesy - The Tirumala Temple



Ease of Attainment
A Fundamental Trait of

LORD VENKATESWARA

- Sri Madabhooshi Ananth

patience, mercy, unconditional love, indifference towards glaring demerits (*sowseelyam*), prosperity, honesty (*arjava*), restlessness in separation and ease of attainment (*sowlabhyam*).

Among these, the attribute of ease of attainment is God's painstaking efforts to transform His otherwise invisible and intangible form to an easily visible and tangible form in order to facilitate the ease of attainment to all those who seek Him earnestly. Pillai Lokacharya says in his text *Mumukshupadi* that Lord appearing as an idol in different temples is an indication of His greatest effort towards granting the ease of attainment to all the qualified on earth. Thus, the 108 *Divya Desas* assume higher importance and among that Tirumala, the abode of Lord Venkateswara, is considered to be *Bhooloka Vaikunta* and Brahmanda Purana says that there is no place equivalent to Venkatadri.

Supremacy and Sowlabhyam : Further, the attribute of *sowlabhyam* shines in conjunction with many other attributes. This can be very well understood by analyzing Nammalvar's hymns in Tiruvoymozhi on Lord Venkateswara. Nammalvar mentions "*Endhaay Than Tiruvenkataththul Nindray*" by which he intends that Lord Venkateswara chose to stand on the pleasant Hills of Tirumala to pique the interest in Alwar. This way Lord's *sowlabhyam* shines along with His supremacy.

Sowlabhyam in Exclusivity : Alwar states that there is no God other than Lord Venkateswara to be the rightful recipient of all the eulogies. The bees that constantly look for honey in the flowers are teaming up making a pleasant coherent humming sound as a tribute to Lord Venkateswara. This can be noted in Tiruvoymozhi hymn "*Thenna thena yena vandumural Tiruvenktadaththu..*" Acharya Nampillai, who gave a beautiful commentary for

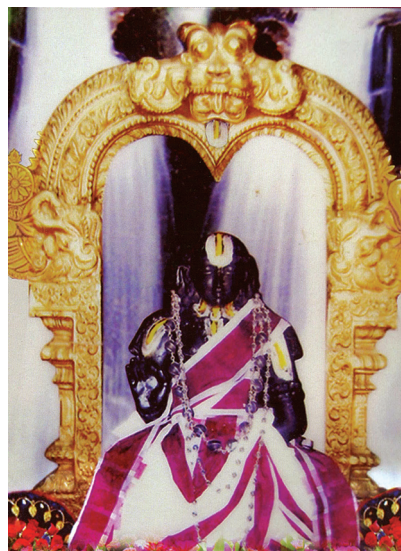
The tradition of Sri Vaishnavism states that the Truth (Tattva) is classified into three categories; Sentient, non-sentient and the Creator. If we look all around us, things that are visible and tangible would fall under either of the first two categories. The invisible and intangible God holds these things as His form of existence. God is omni-potent, omniscient, omni-present, full of knowledge, infinite, flawless and always with the ever-inseparable Consort Sri Mahalakshmi. These are some of the very attributes that testify His Lordship and therefore with these attributes in place and with His Lordship established His *Divyatma swarupa* shines with infinite other traits. The six notable traits viz., knowledge (*jnana*), power (*sakti*), strength (*Bala*), wealth (*Isvarya*), valor (*veerya*) and brilliance (*Tejas*) of the Lord result in countless other traits.

In *Tatvatraya* of Pillai Lokacharya, the six notable traits are divided into three couplets from which spring different sub attributes. From *jnana* and *sakti* spring the following ten sub-attributes. They are – *jnana*, *sakti*,

this Tiruvoymozhi, explains that Lord Venkateswara is like the elephant gifted to the great poet Nammalvar in praise of his poetic verse on Lord Venkateswara. This explains the *Sowlabhayam* in the form of exclusivity of Lord Venkateswara in being the recipient of divine verses of Nammalvar.

Archavathara Sowlabhyam : Also, Lord Venkateswara stands on Tirumala, which is full of beautiful gardens, water fountains, rich variety of flora and fauna and the northern border of Tamil speaking land. He is naturally with infinite attributes which are constantly echoed by the unstructured chants of pilgrims due to sheer bhakti. This is cited by Nammalvar in Tiruvoymozhi hymn “*Var punalanthannaruvi Vada Tiruvenktadaththenda*”. Further, Alwar states that such pilgrims who keep chanting Lord Venkateswara’s names and attributes are acknowledged and admired by the celestial gods in Sri Vaikuntam. This is the *Archavatara sowlabhyam*.

Sowlabhyam on Periya Tirumalai Nambi : Apart from Nammalvar, there are adequate references quoted in Sri Vaishnava *sampradaya* historical



texts that particularly give a detailed account of Lord Venkateswara’s *sowlabhyam* at various instances in time.

Periya Tirumalai Nambi, who is the disciple of Yamunacharya was the first among the *Purvacharyas* to have dedicated greater part of his life to the exclusive service of Lord Venkateswara when none dared the hostile climate prevailing then. It is quoted that Lord exhibited His *Sowlabhyam* to Tirumalai Nambi by assuming a form of a hunter requesting water to quench His thirst. Nambi, not recognizing the hunter refused

to share the water as it was meant for the daily rituals of Lord. At this juncture, it is mentioned that Lord addressed Nambi as “Thatha” which means father in Sanskrit. The Lord’s *Sowlabhyam* resulted in an eternally revered epithet *Thathacharya* to Nambi’s lineage.

Sowlabhyam on Tirumalai Ananthalan : Ananthalan is probably the only Acharya before Manavala Mamunigal to have the distinction of getting two benedictory verses from the Lord Himself, out of His brimming *Sowlabhyam*. There are many miraculous instances cited in the life of Ananthalan who had dedicated the greater part of his life to the service of Lord at the behest of Sri Ramanuja. Since, Ananthalan got the approval from Sri Ramanuja for the *kainkarya*, he accorded greatest respect to the act of performing *kainkarya* in a flawless manner. This was tested by

SAHASRA DEEPAALANKARANASEVA



Sahasra Deepaalankarana (1000-diya decoration seva) is performed outside the temple in Unjal Mandap located in south-east (Agneya) corner of the main temple at 5.30 pm every day. Malayappa swamy and Sreedevi and Bhoodevi are taken out in a procession where 1000 wicks are lit around the unjal (cradle). After seating the God and Goddesses on the unjal, Annamayya keertanas and hymns are sung. The unjal is gently swayed by the priests as the seva continues. The Lord along with Sridevi and Bhudevi are taken out in a procession in the Mada streets after the ceremony is done.

ASTADALAPADA PADMARADHANA



This ritual was first introduced in Srivari Temple in 1984, the Golden Jubilee year of TTD, when a devotee offered Lord Srinivasa 108 gold lotuses. After that, it became another Arjitha Seva on Tuesdays in the early hours.

The archana commences the puja by offering *dhup* (incense stick) and *dipa* (lit the lamp) to the main deity. Then the priest recites the divine names (108) of the Lord.

While uttering each name of the Lord, one golden lotus is placed in a symmetric design around the holy feet of the lord round the pedestal. On completion of the archana, aarati is offered.

the Lord Himself when He calls upon Ananthalwan at once to be available in the temple and Ananthalwan refuses to oblige as he was involved in carrying out his Acharya's orders and can report only after he finishes that. It is said that the Lord was astonished at his Acharya nishta and granted Ananthalwan's desire of having a day exclusively for recitation of Ramanuja Noorthanthandhi in the 21 Day annual Adhyayana Utsava in Tirumala. This shows the *Sowlabhyam* of Lord on Ananthalwan.

Sowlabhyam on Prathivadhi Bhayankaram

Anna: Anna, one among the eight disciples of Manavala Mamunigal, visited Tirumala and happened to chance upon the people who were involved in getting holy water for rituals from Akasa Ganga. While walking with them, he happened to discuss the greatness of Manavala Mamunigal. After reaching the temple, the water was handed over to the chief priest who offered that to the Lord. Typically, when the water was brought into the temple, the people who carried that would mix the exotic herbs to add divine fragrance to the water to enhance its usability for the Lord's rituals. In the process of the unusual discussion about Manavala Mamunigal, the procedure of adding herbs was forgotten and they felt extremely sorry for having committed a heinous blunder. But the feel of guilt did not last long as the priest who had consumed the water after offering to Lord comforted them that the water was more fragrant than it usually used to be. Anna realized that the very recitation of Manavala Mamunigal's greatness was doing wonders and approached him in Srirangam to become his disciple.

The other disciple of Mamunigal, Ponnadikkal Jeeyar, also recommended Anna to Mamunigal and he became Mamunigal's ardent disciple. At the behest of Mamunigal, Anna composed the most mellifluous prayers {*Suprabhatam*} rendered as the first thing every morning for the Lord in Tirumala. He concluded these prayers with a special mention that Lord Venkateswara resides in the heart of Manavala Mamunigal. This is ordained to be recited everyday as the first thing in the morning and this way Lord's *Sowlabhyam* shines benevolently on Anna, Manavala Mamunigal and all the followers.

In this way there are innumerable instances in the walks of every believer where *sowlabhya* of Lord Venkateswara played a pivotal role with life changing miracles for the betterment of life.





Selfless Service to LORD SRINIVASA

- Smt. T.S. Rajalakshmi

(Hanuman and the army of vanaras), a bird (Jatayu), etc. He treated them all alike without any distinction. Hanuman is considered the most devoted among the Bhaktas.

Similarly, in Krishna Avatar, the Lord accepted the butter from the Gopikas, the food from Brahmin women, garland from Malakara, sandal paste from Kubja, rice flakes from Sudama, bananas from Vidura and the list goes on. Lord Krishna blessed them all for their selfless devotion.

Utmost devotion :

King Thondaman, Potter Kuruva Nambi, great scholar Acharya Tirumalai Nambi were belongs to different regions, but what was common to them was their “utmost devotion to Lord Venkateswara”. The Lord accepted their services happily and showered His grace upon them. Their incidents teach us how to perform service to the Lord.

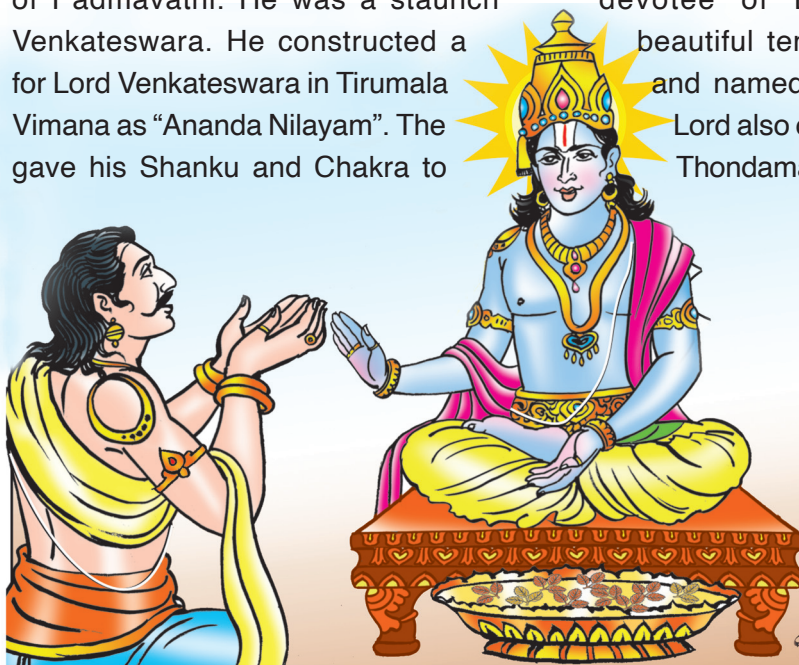
Thondaman Chakravarthy was a well-known king and uncle of Padmavathi. He was a staunch devotee of Lord Venkateswara. He constructed a beautiful temple for Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala and named the Vimana as “Ananda Nilayam”. The Lord also once gave his Shanku and Chakra to Thondaman to

Sri Vasiprasada

Lord Venkateswara has all the way come down to earth to bless the people on the earth. Whether one is a king or a learned vedic scholar or a poor man, it does not matter to Him. He looks for sincere devotion of the devotee only. As Lord mentions in the Gita, “*yo mey bhaktyaa prayacchati Tad aham bhakti-upahritam ashnaami prayata aatmanah*. Whatever is given with devotion, I accept it wholeheartedly”.

Kulasekhar Alwar says “*emperuman ponmalai mel ethenum aavene*”, which suggests that Alwar is ready to be anything living or non-living to do service to the Lord. That shows his intense devotion.

The Lord accepts even a small service offered sincerely. This can be seen in the Ramayana where Lord Rama accepted the service of a squirrel, a boatman (Guha), a tribal woman (Sabari), a Vanara



win a war. Thondaman used to offer the Lord beautiful flowers, silk robes and gold ornaments daily and worship Him. It occurred to him one day, “Let me arrange for flowers made of Gold”. And , he started offering the same to the Lord. One day he felt, “What a beautiful smile Lord dons when He is decorated with the gifts I offer. Doesn’t He look more beautiful because of them?”. The Lord smiled and thought “Hmm...Thondaman is a great devotee, but he now thinks that my beauty is due to his offerings. I’ve to make him realize the meaning of true devotion!”.

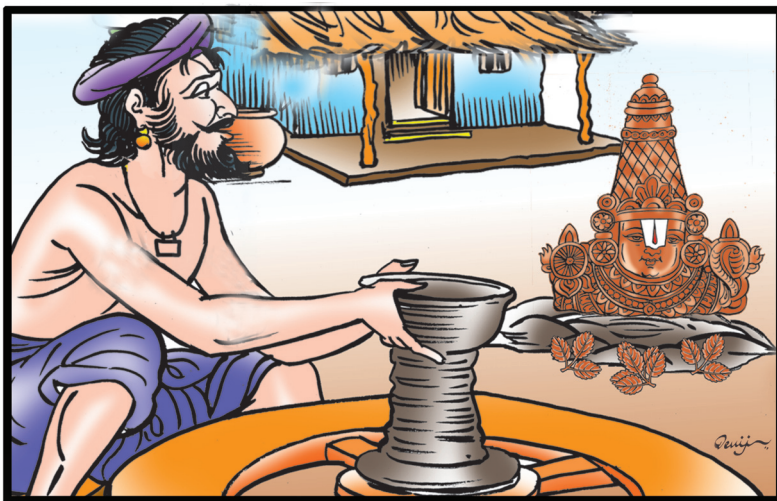
True Devotion

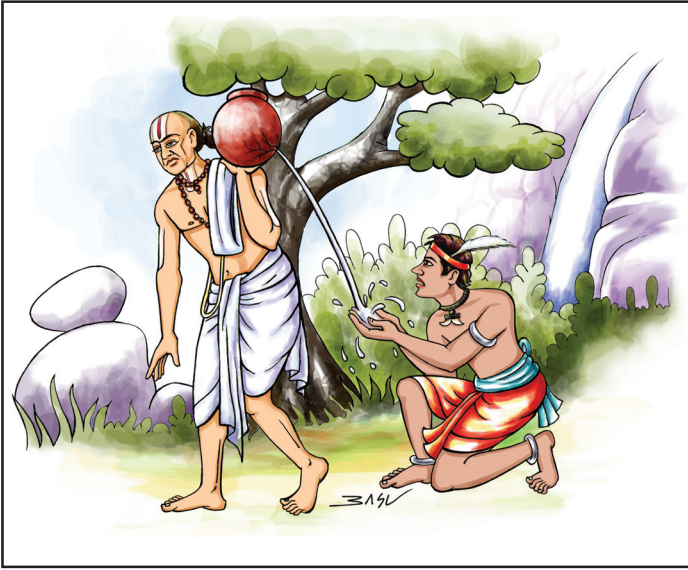
The Lord wanted to reveal the true devotion of a Potter named “Kuruva Nambi” to bring about realization in Thondaman. Kuruva Nambi is also called “Bhima” in some texts. Though he was busy making pots, he always used to chant the name of “Govinda”. He yearned for the darshan of Lord Venkateswara on Tirumala Hills daily, but by the time he finished his work, it was too late to go to temple. So, he made an idol of Lord Venkateswara with clay in his hut and was content to worship the idol at home itself. Every day, he regretted, “Sorry Lord, I could not visit You today as I had a lot of work to meet the requirements of my customers. Please forgive me and accept my flowers made of clay.” Thus, he offered “clay flowers” to the clay idol in his hut daily. Surprisingly, when Tondaman went to the temple he found the “clay flowers” instead of his golden flowers at the feet of the Lord. Angrily, he ordered his men to search for the person who had committed the fault of offering clay

flowers to the Lord. `That night Lord Srinivasa appeared to Thondaman in his dream and said “Thondaman! Wake up! You are a true devotee, but your ego made you feel that you are the only devotee who had made me happy with wealthy ornaments and robes! My child, as you are the King, you were able to offer royal service to me. But for me, even earthen flowers are as important as the golden ones if only they are offered with selfless devotion.” Thondaman questioned, “Are you not happy with my golden flowers? Are they not greater than those clay flowers of Nambi?” The Lord answered, “Nambi always chants my name and thinks of me. Selfless action made him a greater Bhakta than you”. Thondaman then regretted, “What a fool I’m! I thought riches would make the Lord happier! I will visit that Bhagavatottama immediately” and rushed to his hut.

Kuruva Nambi was tense to see the King Thondaman. He realized that the bond between him and the Lord was the cause of the King’s misery. He immediately, meditated on Lord Venkateswara and breathed his last. Lord Srinivasa accepted the “Saranagati” performed by Kuruva Nambi. Thus, the Lord blessed both the devotees.

Tirumala Nambi was one of the Acharyas of Sri Ramanuja and also his maternal uncle. He was a scholar who had given Srimad Ramayana Rahasyas to Sri Ramanuja. Those days, staying in Tirumala was very tough due to weather conditions and dangerous due to the presence of wild animals. Very few people stayed in Tirumala and performed “Kainkaryam” (service) to Lord Venkateswara. One among the best devotees who did kainkarya was “Tirumala Nambi”.





Tirumala Nambi walked almost 7kms daily to “Papavinasam Waterfalls” to fetch water for the Lord. Though this service was quite tiresome, he carried it out with utmost devotion

chanting out the name of “Govinda”. One day, he was walking back to the temple carrying the holy water from Papavinasanam. On the way, a boy appeared before him and asked, “Thatha! Will you please give me some water to drink?” Tirumala Nambi replied, “No dear, this water is specially meant for Lord Srinivasa. So I cannot give you.” The boy requested, “I am very much thirsty. Give me a little water and save me; otherwise I will die!” Nambi told “It’s already late for the Abhishekam. I’ve to go. Pray to the Lord for water, he would arrange!” Thus saying, he started walking. The naughty boy threw a stone at the pot, and quenched his thirst with the gush of water from the pot. Nambi felt exasperated and tears rolled down his cheeks. He appealed to the Lord, “Oh! Lord, I’m sorry, this lad had drunk the water meant for Your Abhishekam (holy bath). I’ve to fetch the water again. It will be late today.” He set out to fetch the water again, but the boy stopped him and told “Thatha, don’t worry! I will create a best place for you to fetch the water. You needn’t go walking all the way hereafter”. Saying that he shot an arrow into the sky. It pierced the sky and a rock and there formed a waterfall nearby. Nambigal was very happy to collect the water. He turned back to thank the boy but could not find him. He realized that is was Lord Srinivasa, “Oh Lord, How compassionate you are towards me! You addressed me as a relative. “Thatha” in Tamil means ‘Grandfather’ and in Sanskrit “Father”. The Lord is so compassionate that he didn’t want His devotees to undergo any difficulty! Then the waterfall is known as “Akasa Ganga”.

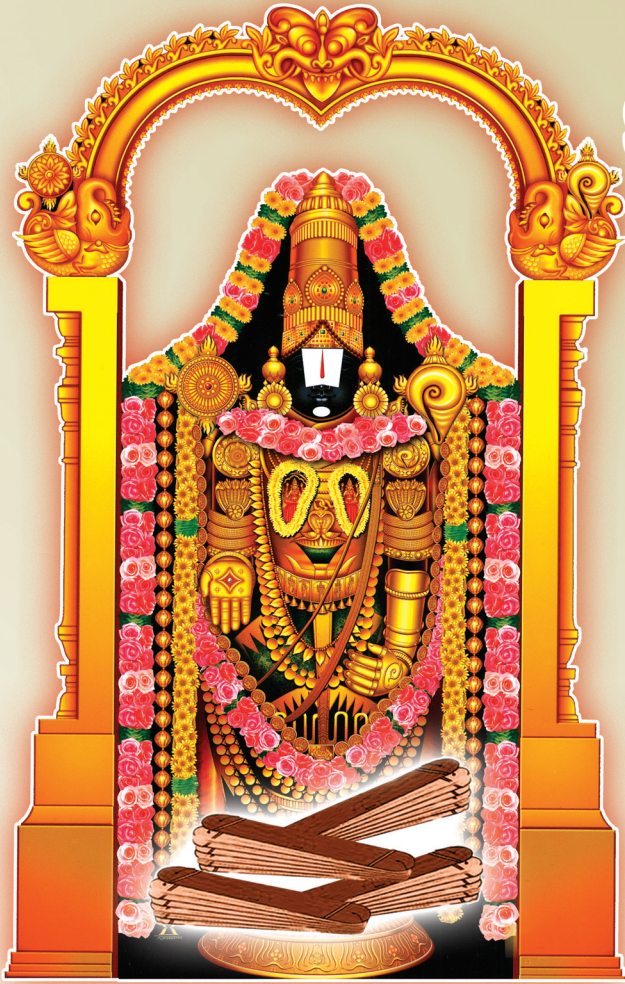
The above incidents are some of the “Leelas” of Lord Srinivasa to show the world about the greatness of His devotees. Let us also do good deeds offering them at His holy feet as “*Sarvam Krishnarpanamastu*”!



SAHASRA KALASABHISHEKAM



It is done in the morning of Wednesdays after the second bell to Bhoga Sreenivasa murthy. 1000 kalas are kept before the Lord. A thin silk thread is tied to the kati hasta (left hand) of the lord and is connected to Bhoga Sreenivasa and the kalasa, signifying the connection with the main deity. After the ceremony water from one of the kalasas is sprinkled on the feet of the main idol.



Supreme Lord SRI VENKATESWARA IN THE VEDAS

- Dr.Kannan Srinivasan

also referred to as Paramapadam in the Rigveda. Tadvishno Paramam padam (Rigveda Samhitam 1-22-20). He is the Supreme Purusha. Sahasrasirsha Purushaha Sahasraakshaha Sahasrapaan (Rigveda Samhitam 10-90-1).

Vyuha - The Vyuha form of the Supreme Lord is four-fold in terms of Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. In the Taittiriyaaranyakam of Krishnayajurveda he is referred to as Vishnu, Narayana and Vasudeva. (Taithiriyaarnyakam 10-6).

Physical Incarnations - The following references are seen in the Vedas about the Vibhava incarnations especially Varaha and Trivikrama. Mahavishnu took the form of an awesome Boar and redeemed Bhumi Devi (Taithiriyaarnyakam 10-8). Sri Mahavishnu measured the entire Universe with three steps in his gigantic, powerful Trivikrama form (Rigveda Samhitam 1-22-18). Vishnu is the most exalted deity. He is the protector of sacrifices. (Yetareya brahmanam 1-1-1). Vishnu mukhaavaidevaha (Taithiriya Samhitam 5-2-1). Yajnovaivishnuhu (Shatpathbrahmanam 1-1-2-13). He is also hailed as the great protector of the oblations to the forefathers. (Shraadhagam samrakshakamahaa vishnuhu).

The exalted greatness of Sri Venkateswara has verily been established by Mahopanishat which states that there was a time when only Narayana existed and at that point of time no other Gods were in existence (Mahopanishat). This eternity of the Lord has been established by the Vedas

The term Brahma also refers to the Vedas which glorify the various forms of the Supreme Lord Sri Venkateswara of the sacred Tirumala Hills. In Srimad Bhagavad Gita the Lord asserts that he alone is known through the Vedas (15-15). Considering his five-fold forms in terms of Para vyuha, vibhava, antaryami and arca, we find references about each one of these amazing manifestations in the ancient Vedas which constitute the four-fold components in terms of Samhita, Brahmanam, Aranyakam and Upanishad.

Eternal Supreme - The Para form refers to the eternal Supreme Mahavishnu. He resides in the Sri Vaikuntha endearing to all and bestows eternal bliss. This ecstatic sacred abode of Mahavishnu is

unequivocally in many other places. The Vedas hail the glories of the three-fold form of Sri Mahalakshmi in the Sri Suktam Bhu Suktam and Nila Suktam. Only because of her, the Lord himself gains greatness (Kaatkam 3-11). The exalted Lord takes various incarnations just to make his devotees happy. But he is not bound by the laws of Karma as ordinary beings are subjected to (Vaajsaneyeesamhitam 31-19). His incarnations are intended to get rid of the evil and to restore righteousness. (Yadaayadaahi Dharmasya B.G. 4-7-8)

In-dweller -Svetasvataropanishad mentions about the Paramatma residing along with the Atman in every being as a witness consciousness without enjoying the fruits of action. Brihadaryanyaka Upanishad specifies that the Atman has to be seen, heard, meditated, contemplated and reflected upon.

Deity Form - In the Kaliyuga the Supreme Mahavishnu felt indifferent being at Srivaikuntha and has taken the easily accessible divine form of Sri Venkateswara at Tirumala and showers his abundant grace on millions of devotees. There is none who can be cited as equal to him. There is no compassionate deity in the world who can even remotely be compared with Sri Venkateswara.

Let us sincerely pray to the Lord of the Seven Hills for his boundless blessings for ensuring continued Universal prosperity, development and well-being.

Om Namo Venkatesaya



ABHISHEKAM



Abhisheka Seva will be performed to the main idol (Moolavarlu) on Fridays. Grihasthas will be allowed to squat in front of the idol behind the Vastram ticket holders. After completion of Abhishek they will be allowed for darshan.

KAINKARYAS RENDERED BY SRI RAMANUJA IN TIRUMALA

- 1) Temple practices and Administration
- 2) Renovating the Anandanilaya Vimanam
- 3) Consecration of idols inside the temple
- 4) Establishing of yoga Narasimha Swami Sannidhi inside the temple
- 5) Constructed Four mada streets in Tirumala
- 6) Changing the schedule of the Lord's Tirumanjanam
- 7) Administration of the Tirumala temple
- 8) Set up Jeeyar Mutt and many more



ASHTOTHARA SATA KALASABHISHEKAM

The seva will be performed to Utsav idols in front of Main Idol on the 1st Wednesday of every month. Abhishek will be performed with 108 Silver Kalasa and Theertha. All the devotees who bought tickets (grihasthas) will be seated at mandap. After the seva, they will be allowed for darshan.



KSHETRAPALAKA OF TIRUMALA

- Sri P.T.S. Murthy

Kshetrapalaka is the guardian deity of a temple. He is the lord of the land (place) where the main deity temple is situated. He protects the temple treasures and ensures no one enters the temple after it is closed with the night rituals. Everyone should take the blessings of the Kshetrapalaka before entering the sanctum sanctorum of the main deity. He is also said to scan the devotees entering the temple for their purity, devotion and submission to God. He controls the ghosts, evil souls and spirits from entering the temple. Sometimes he is depicted in a terrible form with long hanging hairs, warrior's weapons in the hands and angry and wide eyes. But he is kind-hearted and blesses the devotees for their unclenched unlimited devotion to the God.

Guards the Village

In many villages, the goddess called "ammavaru" (mother) is considered the

kshetrapalika. She protects the inhabitants from famine, diseases, and poverty. She guards the village against all perils. The names like, Mutyalaamma, Somaluamma etc. represent the village Kshetrapalikas. Any new person entering the village should first take the permission of the Kshetrapala (blessings) before entering the village.

Kalabhairava is considered the Kshetrapalaka of the holy shrine Kasi and Lord Vishnu for Daaksharama temple of Lord Shiva. Similarly, Lord Shiva is renowned as Kshetrapalaka of Tirumala.

Lord Shiva as Kshetrapalaka

Tirumala is the abode of Lord Vishnu in the form of Lord Venkateswara. But the Kshetrapalaka (custodian) of the temple is Lord Shiva.

The Legend

In ancient times, a massive rock called, Kshetrapala Sila was inhabiting at the northeast corner of Mada Streets in Tirumala. The rock was a moving stone rolling in the Mada streets around the temple once the temple is closed. The Archakas after performing the night rituals used to close the temple. After closing the doors of the Temple, including the Main Door, they used to touch the rock with the “Kunche Kola” (a bunch of keys) of the temple three times while leaving for their residences. Then the rock used to rotate like a ball and roll around the temple throughout the night thus guarding the temple and the deity. As a custodian of the temple, it was used to protect the temple and



A view of Sri Rudra - the Kshetrapalaka located near Gogarbhham reservoir in Tirumala

its treasures. It was not allowing any person to enter the temple when the same is closed. It is normally believed that all Gods/Goddesses, saints, rishis would visit the Lord at night-time to offer their obeisance in an immortal form and nobody should see them.

At the time of Suprabhataseva in the early morning of the day, the Archakas would touch the keys to the Sila thrice as an indication to the Kshetrapalaka that it was the time for beginning the service of the Lord. It would retreat to its original place that was the northeast corner of the temple.

Thus, Lord Shiva as the Kshetrapalaka in the form of the big rock was protecting the temple and the deity.

According to some legends it is said that, one day mistakenly, a boy entered the Mada streets at midnight and was rolled over by the rock. This mishap touched the hearts of the temple authorities. They decided to consecrate the rock permanently at Gogarbha Theertham to avoid recurrence of such events in the future when many devotees in huge numbers would visit the shrine. As a mark of respect to the Lord as custodian of the temple, a small part of the stone has been made in the form of Bali Peetham and consecrated at the same place near the northeast corner of the Dwajastambham (flag post) where the Kshetrapalaka in the form of big rock rested during the service of the Lord. Even to this day, the priests touch this stone slab with the key bunch before opening the temple and after closing the temple. He is the protector of the temple and receives the Puja offering as per agama rules of Northeast corner.

NIJAPADA DARSHAN



Nijapada Darshan Seva is one of the much sought after weekly rituals for Lord Srinivasa in Tirumala. This seva attracts the thousands of devotees to have a glimpse of Lord Venkateswara's feet without any ornaments. Archana Anantara Darshan on Friday is called Nijapada Darshan. Normally the Lord's feet are covered with golden cover and Basil leaves. But on Fridays after performing Abhishek to Lord Venkateswara the feet are left without Basil leaves during which Nijapada Darshan is held which allows devotees to see the feet of the Lord. This is a paid service where the devotees are allowed up to Kulasekhara padi (The closest threshold). The priests decorate the idol with tirunamam (two broad white vertical lines and a red one in between with pure camphor after the Nijapada Seva.

A view of 'Gogarbha Theertham' in Tirumala



Gogarbha Theertham

The Gogarbha Theertham is three Kilometres to the north of the main temple of Tirumala on the way to Akasha Ganga. It got its name as the cave resembles the womb of a cow. It is also called Pandava Theertham because Pandavas had spent a part of their lives in the forest, meditating on Lord Shiva at this cave. Many saints performed penance at this cave. Rudra or Lord Shiva is the main deity of this Theertham. It is a holy place full of the radiance of Lord Shiva and is known for its divinity and purity. The TTD constructed a dam for storing water which is popularly known as the Gogarbha dam. It is facing Narasimha Hill. It is also called Kshetra Palaka Theertham.

Kshetrapalaka Utsavam

On every Maha Shivaratri day, Archakas perform special abhishekam to the presiding deity, Rudra (Shiva). During the performance, they chant Namakam, Chamakam and worship him with all temple rituals.

No wonder, Tirumala is a place of many unknown mystic creations of Lord Venkateswara. His luminosity radiates nook and corner of the entire shrine and the seven hills. The first step set on the hills will evoke a magnificent feeling of attaining the divine kingdom. We need to have a pure heart filled with the warmth of the Lord's blessings and bow down saying that 'I seek to refuge in the lotus feet of the Lord'.

Sri Venkatesa Charanau Saranam Prapadhye!



ALIPIRI The Foot Way To Tirumala

- Dr.K.Sudhakara Rao

In this Kaliyuga, Lord Venkateswara Swami is giving various boons to the devotees according to their wishes. One person may require money. Another may wish to have his own house. Yet another may require prosperity in business. Whatever may be the wish, it will be fulfilled soon if a person has true devotion towards God. However it is a common practice among the devotees to climb Tirumala Hills on foot as a token of gratitude whenever their wish is fulfilled. Alipiri way is one among the ways which leads to Tirumala. Let us analyse the various aspects of Alipiri foot way in a glance and have the blessings of the Lord.

Tirumala is being considered a sacred place. Every day thousands of devotees visit Tirumala in order to have darshan of Lord Venkateswara. Many people get a lot of relief after having the darshan of Lord. In olden days there were four ways to reach Tirumala. Alipiri is considered as one way among them. Many pilgrims take a vow to go on foot from Alipiri to Tirumala on footway.

Let us know the etymology of Alipiri. Some call it Adipuli. 'Adi' means 'first' in tamil. 'Puli' refers to a 'tamarind tree'. So, Adipuli means the first tamarind tree. There is a tamarind tree near the first step. It is considered an incarnation of Adishesha. It is said that wisdom dawned on Nammalwar under a tamarind tree only. Alipiri is also referred to by some people as 'Adipadi'. 'Adi' means the 'bottom'; 'padi' means 'step'. That is, the steps at the bottom of Tirumala Hills.

Sacred feet of Lord : When we enter towards Alipiri, the first place is 'Padala mandapa'. Here devotees worship the feet of the Lord of Seven Hills. Here we can find an idol of (a devotee) Mala Dasari in a prostrating posture. His devotion made him a great devotee of Lord Venkateswara. His power of devotion has been described in *Amukta Malyada* written by Sri Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara kingdom.

In Padala Mandapam, People worship the feet of the Lord here. Devotees put the sacred feet of the Lord on their head and do pradakshina around temple. Worshipping the feet of the Lord is considered surrender. In Bhagavadgita, the Lord says Sarvadarman parityajya mamekam sharanamvraja, aham twa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa shuchah. After giving up all the dharmas you surrender to me. I shall absolve you of all the sins.

VASTRALANKARANA (MELCHAT) SEVA

The seva will be performed on Fridays to Moolavarlu. Two persons will be allowed to participate in the seva. Grihastas will be allowed to participate in the procession inside the temple with a silk saree and milk vessel during the procession. After the procession the grihastas will be allowed to sit in front of idol to participate in Abhisek and after conduct of Abhisek grihastas will be allowed for darshan.



Apart from these sevas, some annual sevas are being performed to the Lord of Tirumala. Prominent among them are, Teppotsavam, Koil Alwar Thirumanjanam, Vasanthotsavam, Pavithrotsavam, Jyesthabhishekam, Pushpa Yagam, Padmavathi Srinivasa Parinayam, Pushpa Pallaki seva etc.

Forgot to have a darshan : Near the steps, we can find a small temple of Tirumala Nambi. He was the uncle of Sri Ramanujacharya. Under the noble tamarind tree Nambiyar used to narrate the secrets of Ramayana to Sri Ramanujacharya. One day having deeply immersed in the narration of Ramayana, the acharya forgot to go to Tirumala for regular darshan. As a consequence, the Lord came there and told the acharya to have darshan there itself instead of coming to Tirumala. As a result, the Lord's footprints appeared there.

Alipiri at a glance : Devotees can start their journey from Alipiri. At the entrance they can see the gorgeous sculpture of Lord Garuda. After having the darshan of the lotus feet of the Lord, the tamarind tree, Tirumala Nambiyar temple, the devotees should go ahead. There a big gali gopuram. When we enter into the gopuram, we can find a pond. Legend says that Gorakhnath did penance near the pond. When you go ahead, a deer park will appear. The deers are nurtured here.

Walking amidst the lush green way you can also have the darshan of Lord Anjaneya. Thus, the Alipiri way is considered an ideal path to reach Tirumala. Lord of Seven Hills is Kalpavriksha personified. Devotees can fulfill their wishes both material and spiritual by having the darshan of the Lord.

Lord Venkateswara is there to protect the devotees from all the obstacles. He is an embodiment of mercy and also magnanimity. Devotees can use the beautiful Alipiri way to reach Tirumala. At present darshan tokens are not issued between Alipiri footway due to corona pandemic. Have faith in Lord Venkateswara. He will rescue you from all the problems of life. Let us sing the glory of Lord.

Om Namovenkatesaaya



	<p>'VASTRAMS' Adorned to Lord Srinivasa</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Melchat Vastram 2) Uttariyam 3) Gadwal Yeeravada 4) Tirupati Bari Ulchattu vastram 5) Vakshasthala Thaayaarla pattu vastram 6) Duppata Pattu vastram 7) Peethaambaram 8) Seshavastram 9) Kowpeenam 10) Bhatmal Paavada and many more
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Bhavishyottara Purana gives the four names of Venkatachalam. It was mentioned there that for the same hill, different names were given in each Yuga respectively- in Krita Yuga it was called 'Vrishabhachalam', in Treta Yuga it was called 'Anjanaachalam', in Dwapara Yuga it was called 'Seshachalam' and that in Kali Yuga it is called 'Venkatachalam' and the purana explains the reason behind the hill attaining that particular name in that particular Yuga.

In Varaha Purana, for the same Venkatachalam many names were listed and at the same time the significance and reason behind the names were also given.

Chintamani : As the hill has the power to bestow boons and fulfill the wishes of the devotees, it has got this name.

Gnanachalam : As Knowledge is gained by those who do penance and sadhana on this hill, it has got this name.

The Various Names of VENKATACHALAM

- Smt. Ambika Ananth

Theerthachalam : As the hill has sixty six crores of theerthams of which 108 are great ones and 64 are greater ones and 8 are the greatest - all of which highly powerful, it has got this name.

Pushkaradri : As there is a Pushkarini which has the presence of all the sarovarams of the Universe and the special presence of Devi Saraswati, it has got this name.

Vrishadri : Vrishha means Yamadharmaraja - who performed severe penance on the hill and received boons from Lord Srinivasa, so it has got this name (Vrishabhadri is yet another name).

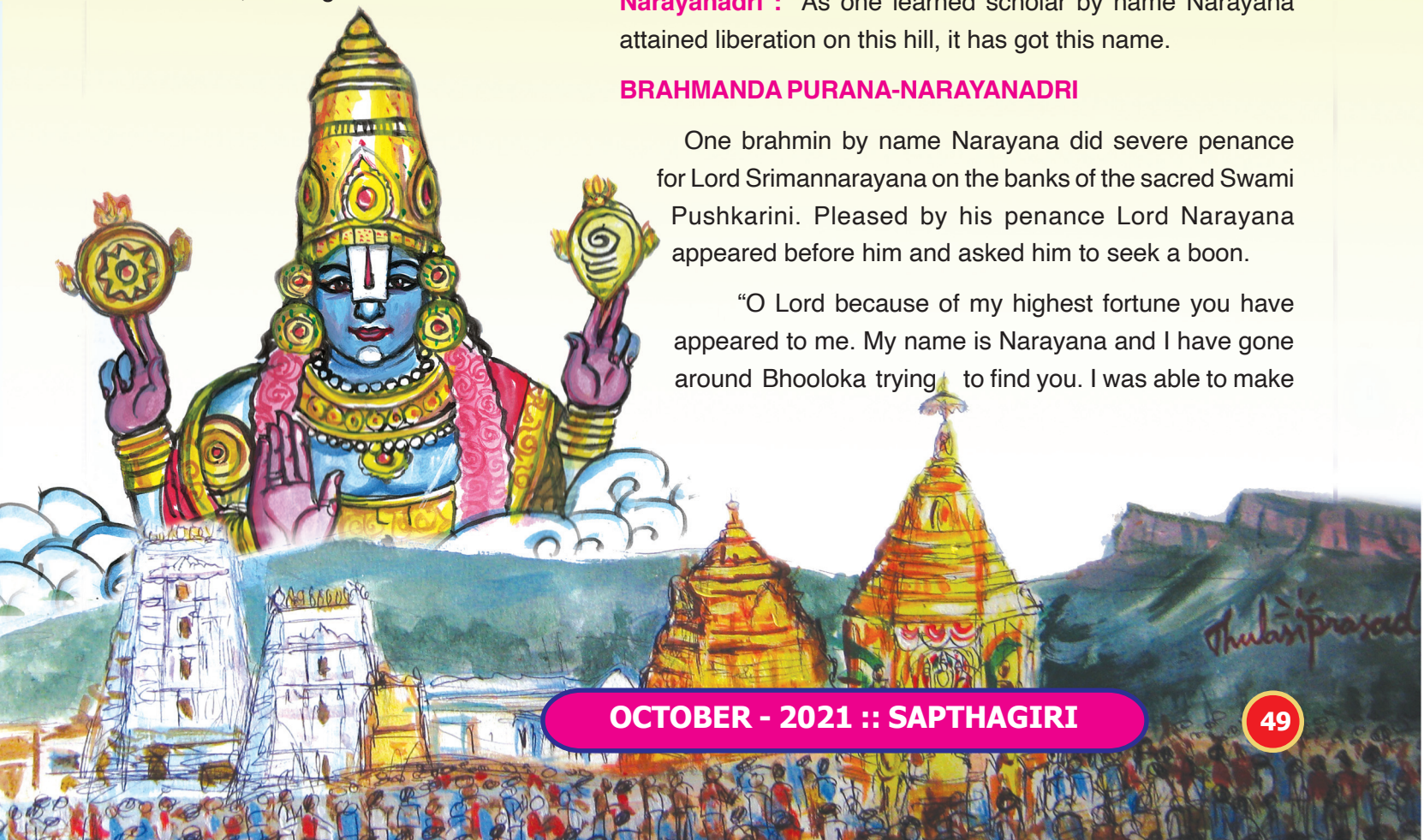
Kanakachalam : Meru mountain's son is Ananda and Sesha arrived here winding around that Ananda mountain. The Lord had decided to make him his abode. Meru is a golden mountain and his son Ananda too is one golden mountain. Hence the hill got this name as Kanaka means gold.

Narayanadri : As one learned scholar by name Narayana attained liberation on this hill, it has got this name.

BRAHMANA PURANA-NARAYANADRI

One brahmin by name Narayana did severe penance for Lord Srimannarayana on the banks of the sacred Swami Pushkarini. Pleased by his penance Lord Narayana appeared before him and asked him to seek a boon.

"O Lord because of my highest fortune you have appeared to me. My name is Narayana and I have gone around Bhooloka trying to find you. I was able to make



Brahma appear and at his behest I came to this hill and did penance to make you appear before me. This kind of penance ordinary mortals cannot do, so to bless and grace everybody and bestow boons, you have to come and reside on the banks of Swami Pushkarini along with your consort Sri Mahalakshmi and your retinue of Adi Sesha, Garuda, Vishvakshena who constantly worship you. And this hill must become renowned through my name!" Lord Srinivasa gave him the boon by pronouncing "Thathaasthu".

"Whoever it might be - a brahmana, Vysya, Kshatriya or sudra- (a brahmin or a trader, a warrior or menial worker), whether a meritorious one or a sinner, if they worship me here after bathing in Swami Pushkarini, I will bless them with the boon to reside in Swarga till the time of final delusion, the apocalypse. I will bestow liberation on them. From this day onwards these hills will be known by your name as "Narayanadri" and will become renowned"- so saying Lord Srinivasa gave that brahmin the final emancipation leading to the state of Sayujyam.

Vaikuntachalam : It was said that along with Lord Srinivasa, Vaikuntha itself has reached here, as Garuda at the behest of Lord Narayana has brought

it to this hill. Thus, this hill attained the name of Vaikuntachalam.

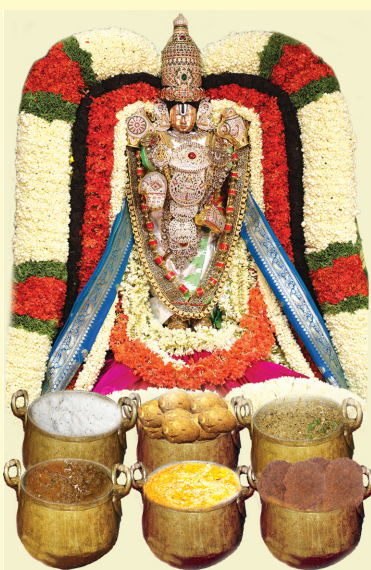
Anjanachalam : Since Anjanadevi did penance on this hill, and also as Anjaneya was born here, this hill got the name Anjanachalam.

Varahachalam : As Lord Varaha made this his abode, it has got the name Varahachalam.

Neelagiri : In Treta yuga, during the time of Rama avatar, a great vanara (kapi) by name Neela did penance on these hills and was bestowed boons- so these hills got the name Neelagiri.

And, there is another story behind this. Neeladevi was one of the eight reigning queens of Lord Krishna. She got married to Lord Krishna twice - at the age of nine as a balabrahmacharini (young celibate) and later as the daughter of Agnijith.

Neeladevi, did great penance at Kumara kshetra on Venkatachalam wanting only the Lord himself as her husband. She had the knowledge of the power of the hill, the power of the theerthams there, the glory and greatness of the Lord - so by contemplating on the auspicious qualities of the Lord who was there in both the forms as Varaha Swamy and Lord Srinivasa, she worshipped the Lord very



Naivedyams Offered to LORD OF SEVEN HILLS IN TIRUMALA

In Suprabhata Seva – Butter, Milk and Sugar.

In Koluvu – Flour mix of Sesames with jiggery

In Kalyanotsava seva – Big Laddus, Vadas, Appams and Anna (Rice) Prasadams

In Sahasra Deepalankara Seva – Panch Kacchayam made up of Sugar, Cashewnuts and mixed with cardamom is offered.

In Tomala Seva – Dusa Padi Ghee Dosasa, Molahora (Pepper, Jeera, Prasadam salt mixed with rice and ghee) and Kadambam is offered.

In Ekanta Seva – Cow milk and a mixture of fried dry fruits are offered.

devoutly- so she became one of the eight consorts of Lord Krishna. Hence the hill is called as Neelachalam.

Anandagiri : Since this hill gives joy to all, it is called Anandagiri. Not only that, the Lord resides on Ananda, the son of Meru mountain-hence the name Anandagiri or Anandaadri. When the Lord ordered Garuda to bring Vaikuntham, he got it along with the vimanam (the gopuram) and King Shankaraju witnessed it and while constructing the gopuram of the temple, he brought the same shape to it. Since Vaikuntha vimana's name is Ananda, the temple gopuram too got that very name - Anandanilayam and the hill too got the name Anandagiri. All this has been written in Puranas.

Srisailam, Srichalam : Since Goddess Lakshmi Devi's presence is there in a very significant way, it has got the names, Srisailam, Srigiri, Srichalam.

Srinivasagiri : Since Lord Srinivasa resides on this hill, it is also called Srinivasagiri.

In this manner, Varaha Puranam gives in detail, the names of Venkatachalam and their significance and the reason behind those names. Today the names we use like Tirumala-Tirupati were not used in the Puranas. In the later times when the Alvars praised the Lord these words became popular because, Tiru means Sri, meaning Lakshmi and the Lord also. Since it is the abode of Lakshmi pati (the consort of Lakshmi Devi) it is called Tirupati. The hill on which Lord Srinivasa resides is Srimala- meaning Tirumala as malai means a hill / mountain. For ages, this Venkatachalam has attained different names, each one quite befitting.



EKANTA SEVA



Most of the days, this seva is performed by the priests themselves as the time depends upon the number of devotees. A golden cot will be hung with silver chains in sayana mandap (sleeping chamber), opposite to Ananda Nilaya. Silk mattress and pillows are laid on the cot. A descendant of Tarigonda Vengamamba offer 'Pearl Aarati'. Offering of milk is kept there for the Swamy. Bhoga Sreenivasa murthy idol is kept on the cot with head towards the South. The famous lullaby "Jo Achyutananda ..." is sung by one of the descendants of Annamayya. Then, temple doors are closed for the day.

Arjit sevas are not being performed currently in Tirumala due to Corona pandemic. TTD is offering only certain sevas online (virtual participation) for the devotees.

OFFERING NEW UMBRELLAS

During Srivari Brahmotsavams, especially on the day of Garuda Seva, newly prepared and decorated umbrellas are being offered to Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala.



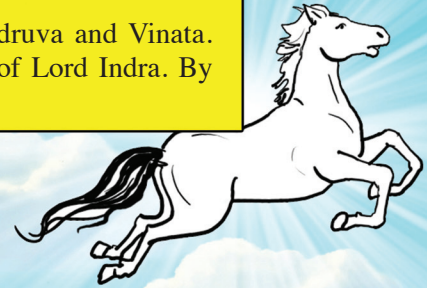


PICTURE STORY

GARUDA VAHANAM

Original Story in Telugu by :
Sri D. Sreenivasa Deekshitulu
Pictures by : Sri Thumbali Shivaji
Translated by : Dr. M. Krishna Kumar

The renowned sage Kashyapa Prajapati had two wives namely Kadruva and Vinata. One day his wives had a bet on the colour of the tail of the horse of Lord Indra. By cheating, Kadruva won the bet.



O! Vinata! You have lost the bet. As per the rule of the bet, you have become my servant.

O! Kadruva! I will abide by your rule. I am your servant

Kadruva called Garuda.

'O! Garuda! Your mother is my servant. So you are also my servant.

'Ok Mother!'

Kadruva ordered him to carry her children, the Nagas on his back for play.

'I will obey your order.'

While playing them on his back, Garuda went near the orbit of the sun. Then Naagaas...



'Horrible! We are severely suffering from the scorching heat of the sun. Save us.'

Kadruva prayed to Lord Varuna for rain. It rained immediately.

We are happy. We are saved.

Kadruva admonished Garuda for what he had done.

'What should I do to become free from servitude?'

'Bring ambrosia and give it to me.'

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Garuda brought ambrosia in an adventurous way and gave it to Kadruva.

You both are free from servitude.

We are blessed.

Meanwhile, Lord Indra snatched away the vessel of ambrosia. Kadruva became sad.

'Oh! My ambrosia!

Lord Vishnu appeared before Garuda.

'Garuda! I appreciate your devotion to your mother. Ask me any boon you like.

'O! Lord! I like the Naagaas as my food.

Garuda! Take one more boon.

Please grant me an opportunity to be Your mount (vahanam) forever.

Vainateya! Let it be done!

O! Lord! I am blessed.'

From that time onwards, Lord Garuda has been serving the Lord as His divine mount (Vahanam).

Quiz

1. Name the Special Abhishekam performed to Chakratalwar in the last day during Brahmotsavam at Tirumala
- Chakrasnanam
 - Snapanam Thirumanjanam
 - Vasanthotsavam
 - Koil Alwar Thirumanjanam

Answer : A : Chakrasnanam

2. Correct the proverb
Parabrahma Swaroopam Annam
(Divine is food)

Answer : Annam Parabrahma Swaroopam
(Food is Divine.)

4. Unjumble the Words in this Universal Mantra:

Venkatesa samo devo
Na bhutho na bhavishyati ||
Venkatadri Samamsthanam
Brahmande nasthi kinchana |

Answer:
Venkatadri Samamsthanam
Brahmande nasthi kinchana |
Venkatesa samo devo
Na bhutho na bhavishyati ||

3. Match the words in Column A with the Column B:

A

HAMSAVAHANAM
SESHAVAHANAM
ASWAVAHANAM
SIMHAVAHANAM
GAJAVAHANAM
GARUDAVAHANAM

B

ELEPHANT
HORSE
SWAN
SERPENT
EAGLE
LION

GARUDAVAHANAM
SESHAVAHANAM
SIMHAVAHANAM
HAMSAVAHANAM
GAJAVAHANAM
ASWAVAHANAM

EAGLE
SERPENT
LION
SWAN
ELEPHANT
HORSE

Correct Series:

5. The Foster Mother of Lord Venkateswara

Answer : Vakula Matha

6. Name the Annaprasadam Complex at Tirumala

Answer : Mathrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba Annaprasadam Complex

7. Riddle:

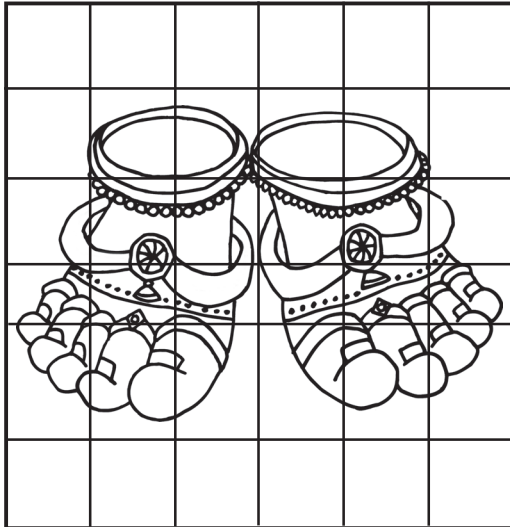
Given below are Statements. Guess the devotee using the clues.

- Lord Srinivasa call him as 'Thatha'.
- He used to get water from Papanasanam for Lord's Abhishekam.
- Lord in the form of a boy appeared before him for water.
- The boy threw a stone at the pot.

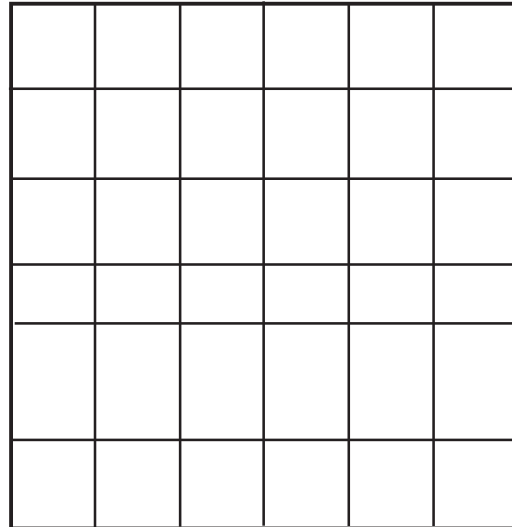
Answer : Tirumala Nambi.

DRAWING

Colour the Picture



Draw the Picture as given



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Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams



Tirumala

Sri Venkateswaraswamivari Brahmotsavams
From 07-10-2021 to 15-10-2021

14-10-2021
Thursday
Day: Rathotsavam



14-10-2021
Thursday
Night : Aswavahanam





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15-10-2021

FRIDAY

DAY: CHAKRASNAM

NIGHT: DWAJAVAROHANAM